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ABSTRACT

The three-part Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) handbook, an annual publication, covers an introduction to COPA, the recognition review process, and policies and guidelines. Part I includes: accreditation and the role of COPA; the COPA board; standing committees (executive committee, committee on recognition, committee on state relations, committee on professional development, nominating committee); COPA members (assembly of institutional accrediting bodies, assembly of specialized accrediting bodies, presidents policy assembly on accreditation); and the COPA staff. Part II is a guide to the COPA recognition review process which describes: general information on site visits, applications, etc.; recognition provisions and procedures; supportive procedural material; the committee on recognition; and reader-consultants and visitors. Part III contains four COPA statements: operational policies; testimonial policies; interagency guidelines; and agency guidelines. (SM)

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The COPA Handbook

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The COPA Handbook

PART I: Introduction and Membership Directories for Board, Standing Committees, and Assemblies

PART II: A Guide to the COPA Recognition Review Process

PART III: Policies and Guidelines of the Council

July 1988

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The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
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Please direct inquiries to:
The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 305
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: (202) 452-1433

Members of the COPA staff are listed on page 27.

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PART ONE

Introduction and Membership Directories for Board, Standing Committees, and Assemblies

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Accreditation and the Role of COPA

Accreditation is a system for recognizing educational institutions and professional programs affiliated with those institutions for a level of performance, integrity, and quality which entitles them to the confidence of the educational community and the public they serve. In the United States this recognition is extended primarily through nongovernmental, voluntary institutional or professional associations. These groups establish criteria for accreditation, arrange site visits, evaluate those institutions and professional programs which desire accredited status, and publicly designate those which meet their criteria.

In most other countries, the establishment and maintenance of educational standards is the responsibility of a central government bureau. In the United States, however, public authority in education is constitutionally reserved to the states. The system of voluntary nongovernmental evaluation, called accreditation, has evolved to promote both regional and national approaches to the determination of educational quality. Although accreditation is basically a private, voluntary process, accrediting decisions are used as a consideration in many formal actions—by governmental funding agencies, scholarship commissions, foundations, employers, counselors, and potential students. Accrediting bodies have, therefore, come to be viewed as quasi-public entities with certain responsibilities to the many groups which interact with the educational community.

In America, accreditation at the postsecondary level performs a number of important functions, including the encouragement of efforts toward maximum educational effectiveness. The accrediting process requires institutions and programs to examine their goals, activities, and achievements; to consider the expert criticism and suggestions of a visiting team; and to determine internal procedures for action on recommendations from the accrediting body. Since accreditation status is reviewed on a periodic basis, recognized institutions and professional programs are encouraged to maintain continuous self-study and improvement mechanisms.

Types of Accreditation

Institutional accreditation is granted by the regional and national accrediting commissions of schools and colleges, which collectively serve most of the institutions chartered or licensed in the United States and its possessions. These commissions and associations accredit total operating units only.

Specialized accreditation of professional and occupational schools and programs is granted by commissions on accreditation set up by national professional organizations in such fields as business, dentistry, engineering, and law. Each of these groups has its distinctive definitions of eligibility, criteria for accreditation, and operating procedures, but all have undertaken accreditation activities primarily to provide quality assurances concerning educational preparation of members of the profession or occupation. Many of the specialized accrediting bodies will consider requests for accreditation reviews only from programs affiliated with institutions holding comprehensive accreditation. Some specialized bodies, however, accredit professional programs at institutions not otherwise accredited. These are generally independent institutions which offer only the particular specified discipline or course of study in question.

Procedures in Accreditation

The accrediting process is continuously evolving. The trend has been from quantitative to qualitative criteria, from the early days of simple checklists to an increasing interest and emphasis on measuring the outcomes of educational experiences.

The process begins with the institutional or programmatic **self-study,** a comprehensive effort to measure progress according to previously accepted objectives. The self-study considers the interests of a broad cross-section of constituencies—students, faculty, administrators, alumni, trustees, and in some circumstances the local community.

The resulting report is reviewed by the appropriate accrediting commission and serves as the basis for evaluation by a **site-visit team** from the accrediting group. The site-visit team normally consists of professional educators (faculty and administration), specialists selected according to the nature of the institution, and members representing specific public interests. The visiting team assesses the institution or program in light of the self-study and adds judgments based on its own expertise and its external perspective. The team prepares an evaluation report, which is reviewed by the institution or program for factual accuracy.

The original self-study, the team report, and any response the institution or program may wish to make are forwarded to the **accreditation commission.** The review body uses these materials as the basis for action regarding the accreditation status of the institution or program. Negative actions may be appealed according to established procedures of the accrediting body.

Although accreditation is generally granted for a specific term (e.g., five or ten years), accrediting bodies reserve the right to review member institutions or programs at any time for cause. They also reserve the right to review any substantive change, such as an expansion from undergraduate to graduate offerings. Such changes may require prior approval and/or review upon implementation. In this way, accrediting bodies hold their member institutions and programs continually responsible to their educational peers, to the constituents they serve, and to the public.

Accreditation's Purposes

Throughout the evolution of its procedures, the aims of postsecondary accreditation have been and are to:

- Foster excellence in postsecondary education through the development of criteria and guidelines for assessing educational effectiveness
- Encourage improvement through continuous self-study and review
- Assure the educational community, the general public, and other agencies or organizations that an institution or program has clearly defined and appropriate objectives, maintains conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, is in fact accomplishing them substantially, and can be expected to continue to do so
- Provide counsel and assistance to established and developing institutions and programs
- Endeavor to protect institutions against encroachments which might jeopardize their educational effectiveness or academic freedom

Postsecondary education in the United States derives its strength and excellence from the unique and diverse character of its many individual institutions. Such qualities are best sustained and extended by the freedom of these institutions to determine their own objectives and to experiment in the ways and means of education within the framework of their respective authority and responsibilities.

Public as well as educational needs must be served simultaneously in determining and fostering standards of quality and integrity in the institutions and such specialized programs as they offer. Accreditation, conducted through nongovernmental institutional and specialized agencies, provides a major means for meeting those needs.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is a nongovernmental organization that works to foster and facilitate the role of accrediting bodies in promoting and insuring the quality and diversity of American postsecondary education. To promote these ends, COPA recognizes, coordinates, and periodically reviews the work of its member accrediting bodies and the appropriateness of existing or proposed accrediting bodies and their activities, through its granting of recognition and performance of other related functions.

With the creation of COPA, postsecondary education for the first time has a national coordinating organization designed to help maintain the balance of the total accrediting process, monitor its relationship to government interests, and increase the awareness and understanding of the various publics concerned with the soundness of institutions and their programs.

With a constituency that includes all types of education beyond high school, COPA is the most broadly representative of the national education associations.

COPA's Constituents

COPA is primarily concerned with:

- The approximately six thousand institutions of postsecondary education, currently accredited or seeking accreditation, which look to COPA to bring order and value to the overall accrediting process
- The fifty-four accrediting bodies which have met established standards for recognition by COPA and with whom COPA works to coordinate and improve nongovernmental accreditation
- The major presidential higher education organizations
- The public, as individual consumers of education and as a collective source of public funds supporting education. The public, and the public's representatives in government, have traditionally depended upon nongovernmental accreditation as an indication that institutions and programs of postsecondary education meet certain established minimum standards of educational quality.

COPA also has a responsibility to serve the broader interests of the educational community and the society of which it is a part. In particular, COPA recognizes the need for maintaining an awareness of the changing environment of postsecondary education and for encouraging increasingly relevant indicators of educational quality. In support of this goal, COPA concerns itself with such issues as accountability, student consumer protection, validity and reliability of standards, educational outcomes, self-regulatory initiatives, eligibility for public funds, and nontraditional and continuing education.

COPA's Organization and Support

Members of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation are organized into three constituent Assemblies:

- **The Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies** (AIAB)—includes nine regional and six national institutional accrediting bodies

- **The Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies** (ASAB)—includes thirty-nine specialized accrediting groups

- **The Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation** (PPAA)—includes the major presidential higher education organizations which do not sponsor accreditation but which currently participate in COPA: the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, the American Council on Education, the Association of American Colleges, the Association of American Universities, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges

The Assemblies provide a forum for members to exchange views, debate issues, and make recommendations for action to the Board of Directors which governs the Council.

The nineteen-member COPA Board represents institutional and specialized accreditation, national associations of colleges and universities, and the public. The composition of the Board includes:

- Three members elected by the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies
- Three members elected by the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies
- Three members elected by the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation
- Three chief executive officers of accredited institutions, elected by the Board

- Three public representatives from outside the academic accrediting community, elected by the Board
- Four ex officio members including:
  - ☐ the Chairman of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies
  - ☐ the Chairman of the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies
  - ☐ the Chairman of the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation
  - ☐ the President of the Council

The COPA Board meets twice a year, in April and October. It delegates to a six-member Executive Committee responsibility for overseeing COPA operations and for recommending appropriate action to the full Board. Other standing committees are the Committee on Recognition, Committee on State Relations, Committee on Professional Development, and Nominating Committee. The Board may establish other committees and assign their duties as it deems necessary to carry out the functions of the Board or Council. These include committees working to develop Council policy on particular issues of concern.

COPA is supported primarily by annual dues paid by COPA-recognized accrediting bodies and the seven national organizations that participate in COPA. As a nonprofit organization, COPA deals in services to its constituents. Most expenditures are for personnel, the work of the Board and Committee on Recognition, and various other committees and task forces.

The COPA Board

The governance of COPA is vested in a Board of Directors, consisting of fifteen elected and four ex officio members. The following list is arranged according to the electing authority for each Board member. Terms of office expire June 30 of the year indicated in parentheses.

Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies

Gloria Ann Carritte (1990) (*Member-At-Large, Executive Committee*)
Assistant to the President, Labouré College
2120 Dorchester Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02124

Charles J. Flora (1991)
Professor of Biology, Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington 98225

Donald L. Garrity (1991)
President, Central Washington University
Ellensburg, Washington 98926

Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies

Donald H. Driemeier (1989)
Dean, School of Business Administration, University of Missouri-St. Louis
8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, Missouri 63121

J. Rhodes Haverty (1990) (*Chair, Committee on Recognition*)
Dean, College of Health Sciences, Georgia State University
University Plaza, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Norma S. Rees (1991)
Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, Massachusetts Board of Regents
One Ashburton Place, #1401, Boston, Massachusetts 02108

Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation

James H. Daughdrill, Jr. (1991)
President, Rhodes College
2000 North Parkway, Memphis, Tennessee 38112

E. K. Fretwell (1990) (*Chair*)
Chancellor, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Charlotte, North Carolina 28223

Hugh L. Thompson (1989)
Chancellor, Indiana University at Kokomo
Kokomo, Indiana 46902

At-Large Chief Executive Officers

Vera King Ferris (1991)
President, Stockton State College
Pomona, New Jersey 08240

Mary Ann Lawlor (1989) (*Treasurer*)
Chairman of the Board, Drake Business Schools
10 East 38th Street, New York, New York 10016

Harold D. McAninch (1990)
President, College of DuPage
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137

Public Members

W. Lee Burge (1989)
Chairman, Equifax, Inc.
P.O. Box 4081, Atlanta, Georgia 30302

David F. Johnson (1991)
Chief, Laboratory of Analytical Chemistry, National Institutes of Health
Building 8, Room B2A, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland 20892

Mary Louise Petersen (1992) (*Chair-Elect*)
1401 Country Club Drive, Harlan, Iowa 51537

Ex Officio Members

Robert H. Atwell (1990) (*Chair, PPAA*)
President, American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036

William K. Laidlaw (1989) (*Chair, ASAB*)
Executive Vice President, American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business
605 Old Ballas Road, Suite 220, St. Louis, Missouri 63141

James M. Phillips (1991) (*Chair, AIAB*)
Executive Director, Association of Independent Colleges and Schools
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 350, Washington, D.C. 20036

Thurston E. Manning (*Secretary*)
President, Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 305, Washington, D.C. 20036

Standing Committees

Five standing committees have been established by the Board to carry out the functions of the Board or Council, with other ad hoc committees to fulfill specific responsibilities as deemed necessary by the Board. The standing committees include: the Executive Committee, the Committee on Recognition, the Committee on State Relations, the Committee on Professional Development, and the Nominating Committee.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee exercises all of the powers of the Board during the interim period between Board meetings. It prepares and approves the agenda for each Board session and makes recommendations on the annual budget, financing plan, dues, assessment, and outside funding. The Committee also oversees the Council's investments, reviews the audit, and monitors and reviews staff organization and compensation.

Members of the Executive Committee are:
E. K. Fretwell, *Chair*
Mary Louise Petersen, *Chair-Elect*
Mary Ann Lawlor, *Treasurer*
J. Rhodes Haverty, *Chair, Committee on Recognition*
Gloria Ann Carritte, *Member-At-Large*
Thurston E. Manning, *Secretary Ex Officio*

Committee on Recognition

The Committee on Recognition reviews applications of organizations proposing to engage in accreditation of postsecondary institutions or programs, examines relevant information, conducts hearings, and consults and informs persons about such applications. It evaluates the current performance of recognized accrediting bodies and advises the Board on matters of criteria and procedure in connection with the recognition process. Committee members also make recommendations concerning interagency cooperation in accreditation.

Members of the Committee on Recognition are listed below, with nominating source in parentheses. Abbreviations of these are: Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies (AIAB), Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (ASAB), and Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation (PPAA). Terms of office expire June 30 of the year indicated.

J. Rhodes Haverty (1990) (*Chair*)
Dean, College of Health Sciences, Georgia State University
University Plaza, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Randall E. Bell (AIAB, 1989)
Executive Director, American Association of Bible Colleges
P.O. Box 1523, 130-F North College Avenue, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701

James F. Bemis (AIAB, 1990)
Executive Director, Commission on Colleges, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
3700-B University Way, N.E., Seattle, Washington 98105

John J. Fauser (ASAB, 1989)
Director, Division of Allied Health Education and Accreditation, American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610

W. Howard Fort (Public, 1990)
Attorney at Law; Schwab, Grosenbaugh, Fort and Seamon
Law and Commerce Building, 40 East Mill Street, Akron, Ohio 44308

Eugene M. Hughes (PPAA, 1989)
President, Northern Arizona University
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Sharon Litwin (Public, 1989)
Assistant Museum Director of Development, New Orleans Museum of Art
37 Maryland Drive, New Orleans, Louisiana 70124

Paul D. Nelson (ASAB, 1990)
Director, Office of Accreditation, American Psychological Association
1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

Henry Spille (PPAA, 1990)
Vice President and Director of the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, American Council on Education
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20036

Committee on State Relations

The Committee on State Relations serves in an advisory capacity to the Board, and in this role it may recommend items for the agenda of the Board or Executive Committee. The Committee is responsible for helping to formulate Council policy as it relates to states and state agencies. Committee members serve when appropriate as the COPA constituency of a joint COPA/State Higher Education Executive Officers Liaison Committee, which addresses common interests of both groups including, but not limited to, issues of quality improvement and enhancement of postsecondary education.

The Committee is composed of members appointed by the Chair of the Board:

Charles Cook
Richard Kunkel
Betsy Levin
James Phillips
James Rogers
Douglas Ward

Committee on Professional Development

The Committee on Professional Development is responsible for planning activities which will enhance the development of accrediting body staff. The Committee advises the Board on matters of professional development and is responsible for specific duties assigned by the Board.

The Committee is composed of the Vice Chairs of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies and Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies (or their designees); and two representatives of the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies, one of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies, and one of the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation, appointed by the Chair of the Board. Current members, with Assembly representation in parentheses, are:

Charles Cook (*Chair*) (AIAB)
Steven Crow (AIAB)
Patricia Evans (ASAB)
Virginia Nieland (ASAB)
Doris Stoll (ASAB)
Jacqueline Woods (PPAA)

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee receives and reviews nominations and places before the Board for election persons qualified for the following positions: Board members from among chief executive officers of accredited institutions, Board members to represent the public, Chair-Elect of the Board, Treasurer of the Board, Member-At-Large of the Executive Committee, members of the Committee on Recognition, and Chair of the Committee on Recognition.

The Nominating Committee is composed of at least three members, appointed by the Chair of the Board. Current members are:

Gloria Ann Carritte, *Chair*
Robert Atwell
William Laidlaw
James Phillips

COPA Members

Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies

Institutional accreditation is concerned with evaluation of an educational institution as a whole.

In the following listing, the two dates represent the year of the last review by COPA and the year of the next scheduled review. The scope of activity for which each group is recognized by COPA is listed in italics. The geographic scope of the regional accrediting commissions is identified; all others are national in scope. All inquiries regarding accrediting activities of the particular group should be directed to the listed official.

COPA's Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies brings together the institutional accrediting bodies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. Officers of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies for 1988-89 are:

CHAIR
James M. Phillips, *Executive Director, Association of Independent Colleges and Schools*

VICE CHAIR
Charles Cook, *Director, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges*

SECRETARY
Randall E. Bell, *Executive Director, American Association of Bible Colleges*

National Institutional Accrediting Bodies

BIBLE
Commission on Accrediting
American Association of Bible Colleges 1987, 1992
Colleges that offer diplomas, associate and/or baccalaureate degrees aimed at preparing students for Christian ministries through Biblical, church/vocational, and general studies
Randall E. Bell, Executive Director
P.O. Box 1523
130-F North College Avenue
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701
Tel. (501) 521-8164

BUSINESS
Accrediting Commission
Association of Independent Colleges and Schools 1987, 1992
Private junior and senior colleges of business offering associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees, and private business schools offering certificates, diplomas and special degrees
James M. Phillips, Executive Director
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 350
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. (202) 659-2460

HOME STUDY
Accrediting Commission
National Home Study Council 1988, 1993
Postsecondary home study institutions offering non-degree and degree courses and programs through the master's degree level, primarily by correspondence study
William A. Fowler, Executive Secretary
1601 Eighteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
Tel. (202) 234-5100

RABBINICAL AND TALMUDIC EDUCATION
Accreditation Commission
Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools 1987, 1992

Rabbinical and Talmudic schools which offer rabbinical degrees, ordination, and appropriate undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of rabbinical and Talmudic education
Bernard Fryshman, Executive Director
175 Fifth Avenue, Room 711
New York, New York 10010
Tel. (212) 477-0950

THEOLOGY
Commission on Accrediting
Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada 1984, 1989
Graduate professional schools or seminaries, and graduate programs in theology
Leon Pacala, Executive Director
42 East National Road
P.O. Box 130
Vandalia, Ohio 45377-0130
Tel. (513) 898-4654

TRADE AND TECHNICAL
Accrediting Commission
National Association of Trade and Technical Schools 1986, 1991
Private trade and technical schools
Dorothy Coyne Fenwick, Executive Director
2251 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20007
Tel. (202) 333-1021

Regional Institutional Accrediting Bodies

MIDDLE STATES
Commission on Higher Education
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools 1985, 1990
Degree-granting institutions which offer one or more postsecondary educational programs at least one academic year in length; Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities
Robert Kirkwood, Executive Director (until December 1, 1988)
Howard L. Simmons, Executive Director (after December 1, 1988)
3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104
Tel. (215) 662-5606

NEW ENGLAND
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
New England Association of Schools and Colleges 1985, 1990
Institutions that award bachelor's, master's, or doctor's degrees; and two-year institutions which include in their offerings degrees in liberal arts or general studies; Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities
Charles M. Cook, Director
The Sanborn House
15 High Street
Winchester, Massachusetts 01890
Tel. (617) 729-6762

Commission on Vocational, Technical, and Career Institutions
New England Association of Schools and Colleges 1985, 1990
Non-profit and privately owned one- or two-year degree and non-degree-granting in-

stitutions, and three- and/or four-year non-degree-granting institutions which offer general or specialized programs which lead to career opportunities; Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities

Daniel S. Maloney, Director
The Sanborn House
15 High Street
Winchester, Massachusetts 01890
Tel. (617) 729-6762

NORTH CENTRAL
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools 1985, 1990
Institutions which offer one or more undergraduate educational programs at least two academic years in length, or one or more graduate programs at least one academic year in length if only graduate programs are offered; Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities

Patricia A. Thrash, Director
159 North Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Tel. (312) 263-0456

NORTHWEST
Commission on Colleges
Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges 1985, 1990
Postsecondary institutions with programs of at least one academic year in length; Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities

James F. Bemis, Executive Director
3700-B University Way, N.E.
Seattle, Washington 98105
Tel. (206) 543-0195

SOUTHERN
Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools 1985, 1990
Postsecondary degree-granting institutions; Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities

James T. Rogers, Executive Director
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097
Tel. (404) 329-6500

Commission on Occupational Education Institutions
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools 1985, 1990
Postsecondary, non-degree-granting institutions; Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, certain degree-granting institutions in Alabama now affiliated with the Commission, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities

Kenneth W. Tidwell, Executive Director
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097
Tel. (404) 329-6530

WESTERN

Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges
Western Association of Schools and Colleges 1985, 1990
Institutions which offer one or more educational programs of at least one academic year in length at the postsecondary level; California, Hawaii, Guam, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities
John C. Petersen, Executive Director
P.O. Box 70
9053 Soquel Drive
Aptos, California 95003
Tel. (408) 688-7575

Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities
Western Association of Schools and Colleges 1985, 1990
Institutions which offer one or more educational programs of at least one academic year in length beyond the first two years of college; California, Hawaii, Guam, and other geographical areas in which the Commission now conducts accrediting activities
Stephen S. Weiner, Executive Director
P.O. Box 9990, Mills College
Oakland, California 94613-0990
Tel. (415) 632-5000

Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies

Specialized accreditation focuses on educational units or programs within institutions, although some specialized bodies also evaluate free-standing professional or occupational schools. Specialized accrediting bodies are supported by many professional organizations or by groups of such organizations.

In the following listing, the two dates represent the year of the last review by COPA and the year of the next scheduled review. The scope of activity for which each group is recognized by COPA is cited following the dates. All of the specialized accrediting bodies operate nationally. Inquiries regarding accrediting activities of a particular group should be directed to the listed official.

COPA's Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies brings together the specialized accrediting bodies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. Officers of the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies for 1988-89 are:

CHAIR
William K. Laidlaw, *Executive Vice President, American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business*

VICE CHAIR
Billie Ackerman, *Director, Education Division, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association*

SECRETARY
Douglas Ward, *Secretary, Office of Osteopathic Education, American Osteopathic Association*

ALLIED HEALTH

Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation
American Medical Association 1988, 1993
John J. Fauser, Director
Division of Allied Health Education and Accreditation
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610
Tel. (312) 645-4660

COPA recognizes the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA) as an umbrella agency for nineteen review committees, which represent professional organizations collaborating in the accreditation of programs in the areas of allied health listed below. Allied health agencies outside of CAHEA are listed individually by discipline elsewhere. The review committees, individual contact persons, and professions (in italics) are listed below.

Accreditation Review Committee of Education for the Anesthesiologist's Assistant
Anesthesiologist's assistant
L.M. Detmer, Director, Allied Health Education
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois 60610
Tel. (312) 645-4623

Committee on Accreditation of Specialist in Blood Bank Schools
American Association of Blood Banks
Specialist in blood bank technology
Deborah Butler Newman, Program Coordinator
1117 North 19th Street, Suite 600, Arlington, Virginia 22209
Tel. (703) 528-8200

Joint Review Committee on Education in Cardiovascular Technology
Cardiovascular technologist
David J. Feild, Executive Director, JRC-CVT
American College of Cardiology, Heart House
9111 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20814
Tel. (301) 897-5400, extension 249

Cytotechnology Programs Review Committee
American Society of Cytology
Cytotechnologist
Shirley Indictor, Secretary, CPRC
American Society of Cytology
1015 Chestnut Street, Suite 1518, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
Tel. (215) 922-3880

Joint Review Committee on Education in Diagnostic Medical Sonography
Diagnostic medical sonographer
Marilyn Fay, Executive Director
111 North Canal Street, Suite 525, Chicago, Illinois 60606-7203
Tel. (312) 902-1109

Joint Review Committee on Education in Electroneurodiagnostic Technology
Electroencephalographic technologist
Mary Jo Martin, Executive Secretary
11526 53rd Street, North
Clearwater, Florida 34628

Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs for the EMT-Paramedic
Emergency medical technician-paramedic
Philip von der Heydt, Executive Secretary
1701 West Euless Boulevard, Suite 200, Euless, Texas 76040
Tel. (817) 283-2836

National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences
Histologic technician/technologist, medical laboratory technician (associate degree), medical laboratory technician (certificate), medical technologist

Jacqueline Parochka, Executive Director
547 West Jackson Boulevard, Suite 608, Chicago, Illinois 60606
Tel. (312) 461-0333

Curriculum Review Board
American Association of Medical Assistants
Medical assistant
Anna Johnson, Director of Accreditation
20 North Wacker Drive, Suite 1575, Chicago, Illinois 60606
Tel. (312) 899-1500

Accreditation Review Committee for the Medical Illustrator
Medical illustrator
Wallace Clark, Jr., Assistant Director, Accreditation Services
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois 60610
Tel. (312) 645-4629

Council on Education
American Medical Record Association
Medical record administrator, medical record technician
Claire Benjamin, Director, Academic Division
875 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1850, Chicago, Illinois 60611
Tel. (312) 787-2672

Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology
Nuclear medicine technologist
Elaine Cuklanz, Executive Director
445 South 300 East, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
Tel. (801) 355-9628

Accreditation Committee
American Occupational Therapy Association
Occupational therapist
Brena Manoly, Director, Division of Accreditation
1383 Piccard Drive, Suite 300, Rockville, Maryland 20850
Tel. (301) 948-9626

Joint Review Committee for the Ophthalmic Medical Technician/Technologist
Ophthalmic medical technician/technologist
Alice Gelinas, Administrator
Joint Commission on Allied Health Personnel in Ophthalmology
1812 North St. Paul Road, St. Paul, Minnesota 55109
Tel. (612) 770-9775

Joint Review Committee for Perfusion Education
Perfusionist
Robert B. Parks, Director, Accreditation Services
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn, Chicago, Illinois 60610
Tel. (312) 645-4627

Accreditation Review Committee of Education for Physician Assistants
Physician assistant, surgeon's assistant
L.M. Detmer, Secretary, JRCPA
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610
Tel. (312) 645-4623

Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiologic Technology
Radiation therapy technologist, radiographer
Marilyn Fay, Executive Director
111 North Canal Street, Suite 525, Chicago, Illinois 60606-7203
Tel. (312) 902-1100

Joint Review Committee for Respiratory Therapy Education
Respiratory therapist, respiratory therapy technician
Philip von der Heydt, Executive Director
1701 West Euless Boulevard, Suite 200, Euless, Texas 76040
Tel. (817) 283-2835

Accreditation Review Committee of Educational Programs for the Surgical Technologist
Surgical technologist
William Teutsch, Executive Director
Association of Surgical Technologists
8307 Shaffer Parkway, Littleton, Colorado 80127
Tel. (303) 978-9010

ARCHITECTURE

National Architectural Accrediting Board 1984, 1989
First professional degree programs in architecture
John M. Maudlin-Jeronimo, Executive Director
1735 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
Tel. (202) 783-2007

ART AND DESIGN

Commission on Accreditation
National Association of Schools of Art and Design 1987, 1992
Institutions and units within institutions which offer associate, baccalaureate and/or graduate degree programs in art, design, and art/design related disciplines; and non-degree-granting institutions having programs in these areas
Samuel Hope, Executive Director
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21
Reston, Virginia 22090
Tel. (703) 437-0700

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT, AND ACCOUNTING

Accreditation Council
American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business 1983, 1988
Bachelor's and master's degree programs in administration, management and accounting
William K. Laidlaw, Jr., Executive Vice President
605 Old Ballas Road, Suite 220
St. Louis, Missouri 63141
Tel. (314) 872-8481

CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION

Commission on Accreditation
The Council on Chiropractic Education 1986, 1991
Institutions offering the doctor of chiropractic degree
Ralph G. Miller, Executive Vice President
3209 Ingersoll Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50312
Tel. (515) 255-2184

CONSTRUCTION EDUCATION
Accreditation Committee
American Council for Construction Education 1984, 1989
Baccalaureate programs in construction, construction science, construction management, and construction technology
Robert M. Dillon, Executive Vice President
1015 15th Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel. (202) 347-5875

COUNSELING
Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs
American Association for Counseling and Development 1987, 1990
Master's degree programs designed to prepare individuals for community counseling, mental health counseling, school counseling, student affairs practice in higher education, and doctoral level programs in counselor education and supervision
Carol L. Bobby, Executive Director
5999 Stevenson Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22304
Tel. (703) 823-9800, extension 301

DENTISTRY AND DENTAL AUXILIARY PROGRAMS
Commission on Dental Accreditation
American Dental Association 1984, 1989
First professional programs in dental education and degree and certificate programs in dental auxiliary education (dental assisting, dental hygiene and dental laboratory technology); advanced degree and certificate programs in dental education (dental public health, endodontics, oral pathology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, prosthodontics, general practice residency and general dentistry)
Mario V. Santangelo, Secretary
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Tel. (312) 440-2719

DIETETICS
Council on Education Division of Education Accreditation/Approval
The American Dietetic Association 1983, 1988
Coordinated undergraduate programs in dietetics, and post-baccalaureate dietetic internship programs
Barbara J. Bobeng, Assistant Executive Director
Division of Education and Research
(address as of September 1, 1988)
216 West Jackson Boulevard, 7th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995
Tel. (312) 899-4870

ENGINEERING
Engineering Accreditation Commission
Technology Accreditation Commission
Related Accreditation Commission
Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology 1985, 1990
Professional engineering programs at the basic (baccalaureate) and advanced (master's) level; baccalaureate programs in engineering technology; two-year (associate degree) programs in engineering technology; and related engineering and engineering technology programs at the baccalaureate level
David R. Reyes-Guerra, Executive Director
345 East 47th Street

New York, New York 10017
Tel. (212) 705-7685

FORESTRY

Committee on Accreditation
Society of American Foresters 1984, 1989
First professional degree programs, baccalaureate or higher, in forestry education
P. Gregory Smith, Associate Director
Educational and Professional Standards
5400 Grosvenor Lane
Bethesda, Maryland 20814
Tel. (301) 897-8720

FUNERAL SERVICE EDUCATION

Committee on Accreditation
American Board of Funeral Service Education 1988, 1993
Institutions and programs offering diplomas, associate and baccalaureate degrees in funeral service education and mortuary science education
Gordon Bigelow, Executive Director
23 Crestwood Road
Cumberland, Maine 04021
(207) 829-5715

HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Accrediting Commission on Education for Health Services Administration 1984, 1989
Graduate programs in health services administration, health planning, and health policy analysis
Sherril B. Gelmon, Executive Director (as of October 1, 1988)
1911 North Fort Myer Drive, Suite 503
Arlington, Virginia 22209
Tel. (703) 524-0511

HOME ECONOMICS

Council for Professional Development
American Home Economics Association 1983, 1988
Baccalaureate programs in home economics
Bonnie Rader, Director of Accreditation
2010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. (202) 862-8355

INTERIOR DESIGN

Committee on Accreditation
Foundation for Interior Design Education Research 1986, 1991
Programs from the junior college through the graduate level in interior design
Stephen P. Nobel, Executive Director
322 8th Avenue, Suite 1501
New York, New York 10001
Tel. (212) 929-8366

JOURNALISM

Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 1986, 1991
Units within institutions, a major part of the unit's activities being to offer professional programs preparing students at the bachelor's and master's levels for careers in journalism and mass communications

Susanne Shaw, Executive Director, ACEJMC
School of Journalism
Stauffer-Flint Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045
Tel. (913) 864-3973

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

American Society of Landscape Architects 1986, 1991
First professional programs at the bachelor's or master's level
Karen L. Niles, Director of Education
1733 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
Tel. (202) 466-7730

LAW

Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar
American Bar Association 1986, 1991
Programs leading to the first professional degree in law, and advanced degrees in law
James P. White, Consultant on Legal Education
735 West New York Street, Room 237
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202
Tel. (317) 274-8071

Association of American Law Schools 1986, 1991
Programs leading to the first professional degree in law
Betsy Levin, Executive Director
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 370
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. (202) 296-8851

LIBRARIANSHIP

Committee on Accreditation
American Library Association 1983, 1988
First professional degree programs for librarianship
June Lester, Accreditation Officer
50 East Huron Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Tel. (312) 944-6780

MEDICAL ASSISTANT AND MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Board of Commissioners
Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools 1985, 1990
Private, postsecondary institutions offering educational programs exclusively in allied health, medical assistant programs in private institutions and medical laboratory technician programs in private and public institutions
Hugh A. Woosley, Administrator
Oak Manor Offices
29089 U.S. 20 West
Elkhart, Indiana 46514
Tel. (219) 293-0124

MEDICINE

Liaison Committee on Medical Education
American Medical Association
Association of American Medical Colleges 1983, 1988
Programs leading to first professional degree in medicine and programs in the basic

medical sciences
(in odd-numbered years beginning each July 1st contact:)
Harry S. Jonas, LCME Secretary
Council on Medical Education
American Medical Association
535 North Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610
Tel. (312) 645-4933

(in even-numbered years beginning each July 1st contact:)
LCME Secretary
Association of American Medical Colleges
One Dupont Circle, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. (202) 828-0670

MUSIC
Commissions on Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, Community/Junior Colleges, and Non-Degree-Granting Institutions
National Association of Schools of Music 1987, 1992
Institutions and units within institutions which offer associate, baccalaureate and/or graduate degree programs in music and music-related disciplines, and non-degree granting institutions having programs in these areas
Samuel Hope, Executive Director
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21
Reston, Virginia 22090
Tel. (703) 437-0700

NURSE ANESTHESIA
Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs 1985, 1990
Generic nurse anesthesia educational programs
Doris A. Stoll, Director of Accreditation
216 Higgins Road
Park Ridge, Illinois 60068
Tel. (312) 692-7050

NURSING
Boards of Review for Baccalaureate and Higher Degree, Associate Degree, Diploma, and Practical Nursing Programs
National League for Nursing 1987, 1992
Practical nurse, associate degree, diploma and baccalaureate and higher degree programs
Patricia Moccia, Vice President for Education and Accreditation
10 Columbus Circle
New York, New York 10019
Tel. (212) 582-1022

OPTOMETRY
Council on Optometric Education
American Optometric Association 1984, 1989
Professional programs in optometry and optometric technology
Joyce Urbeck, Manager
243 North Lindbergh Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63141
Tel. (314) 991-4100

OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
Committee on Colleges, Bureau of Professional Education
American Osteopathic Association 1986, 1991

Programs leading to the doctor of osteopathy degree
Douglas Ward, Director
Department of Education
142 East Ontario Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2864
Tel. (312) 280-5842

PHARMACY
American Council on Pharmaceutical Education 1983, 1989
First professional degree programs (baccalaureate or doctoral) in pharmacy
Daniel A. Nona, Executive Director
311 West Superior Street, Suite 512
Chicago, Illinois 60610
Tel. (312) 664-3575

PHYSICAL THERAPY
Commission on Accreditation in Education
American Physical Therapy Association 1983, 1988
Entry-level professional programs for physical therapy, and physical therapy assistant education programs
Virginia Nieland, Director of Accreditation
Transpotomac Plaza
1111 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Tel. (703) 684-2782

PODIATRY
Council on Podiatric Medical Education
American Podiatric Medical Association 1987, 1992
Programs leading to the degree of doctor of podiatric medicine
Jay Levrio, Director
9312 Old Georgetown Road
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-1621
(301) 571-9200

PSYCHOLOGY
Committee on Accreditation
American Psychological Association 1984, 1989
Doctoral programs in professional specialties of psychology and predoctoral internship training programs in professional psychology
Paul D. Nelson, Director
Office of Accreditation
1200 Seventeenth Street., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. (202) 955-7670

PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATION
Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation
National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration 1986, 1991
Master's degree programs in public affairs and administration
Alfred M. Zuck, Executive Director
1120 G Street, N.W., Suite 520
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel. (202) 628-8965

PUBLIC HEALTH
Council on Education for Public Health 1987, 1992
Graduate schools of public health and graduate programs outside schools of public health in community health education and community health/preventive medicine
Patricia P. Evans, Executive Director
1015 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Suite 403
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel. (202) 789-1050

RECREATION AND PARKS
Council on Accreditation
National Recreation and Park Association 1986, 1991
Programs in recreation, park resources and leisure services
Donald D. Henkel, Professional Services Director
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22302
Tel. (703) 820-4940

REHABILITATION COUNSELING
Commission on Standards and Accreditation
Council on Rehabilitation Education 1985, 1990
Master's degree programs in rehabilitation counselor education
Charline M. McGrath, Executive Director
185 North Wabash Street, Room 1617
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Tel. (312) 346-6027

SOCIAL WORK
Commission on Accreditation
Council on Social Work Education 1984, 1989
Baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work education
Nancy Randolph, Director
Division of Standards and Accreditation
1744 R Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel. (202) 667-2300

SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY
Educational Standards Board
American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 1984, 1989
Master's degree programs in speech-language pathology and/or audiology
Billie Ackerman, Director
Education Division
10801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852
Tel. (301) 897-5700

TEACHER EDUCATION
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education 1984, 1989
Baccalaureate and graduate degree programs in teacher education
Richard C. Kunkel, Executive Director
2029 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20006
Tel. (202) 466-7496

VETERINARY MEDICINE
Council on Education
American Veterinary Medical Association 1984, 1989
First professional degree programs in veterinary medicine
Edward R. Ames, Director
Division of Scientific Activities
930 North Meacham Road
Schaumburg, Illinois 60196
Tel. (312) 885-8070

Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation

COPA's Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation brings together seven major presidential higher education organizations which participate in the governance of COPA as representatives of the national postsecondary education community. Each organization appoints two representatives to the Assembly. Officers of the Assembly for 1988-89 are:

CHAIR
Robert H. Atwell, *President, American Council on Education*

SECRETARY
Henry Spille, *Vice President and Director of the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, American Council on Education*

Unless otherwise indicated, all association addresses are One Dupont Circle, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES
Dale Parnell, President
Suite 410
Tel. (202) 293-7050
Harold D. McAninch, President
College of DuPage
Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137
Tel. (312) 858-2800

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
Allan W. Ostar, President
Suite 700
Tel. (202) 293-7070
H. Dean Propst, Chancellor
Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
244 Washington Street, S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Tel. (404) 656-2200

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
Robert H. Atwell, President
Suite 800
Tel. (202) 939-9300
Hugh L. Thompson, Chancellor
Indiana University at Kokomo
Kokomo, Indiana 46902
Tel. (317) 453-2000

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES

John W. Chandler, President
1818 R Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009
Tel. (202) 387-3760

James H. Daughdrill, Jr., President
Rhodes College
2000 North Parkway
Memphis, Tennessee 38112
Tel. (901) 726-3000

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

Robert M. Rosenzweig, President
Suite 730
Tel. (202) 466-5030

John Toll, President
University of Maryland
Central Administration
Adelphi, Maryland 20783
Tel. (301) 853-3601

ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNING BOARDS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Jacqueline E. Woods, Vice President for Programs and Public Policy
Suite 400
Tel. (202) 296-8400

Mary Wallace Wheat
331 Sunkist Court
Los Altos, California 94022
(415) 948-7147

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE UNIVERSITIES AND LAND-GRANT COLLEGES

Robert L. Clodius, President
Suite 710
Tel. (202) 778-0818

Bruce R. Ekstrand, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
University of Colorado at Boulder
Boulder, Colorado 80309
Tel. (303) 492-5537

The COPA Staff

The Council's daily activities are conducted by a full-time staff with headquarters at the National Center for Higher Education in Washington, D.C.

Current COPA staff members are:

Thurston E. Manning
President

Marjorie Peace Lenn
Director, Professional Services

Gloria Chernay
Director, Constituent Services

Janet D. Froom
Coordinator, Public Affairs

Donald B. Kaveny
Executive Assistant to the President

Theresa Branch and Barbara L. Ross
Secretaries

A Guide to the COPA Recognition Review Process
INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR COPA RECOGNITION

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Introduction to the Guide

The recognition review process is intended to be of benefit to the accrediting body as well as fulfilling one of accreditation's major responsibilities. It is the position of the Council that the recognition process is not merely regulatory, requiring judgment about conformity with provisions, but ought to provide an opportunity for self-analysis and stimulus for improvement of all aspects of the accreditation process. The application submitted by the accrediting body is then only one essential record reflecting the commitment of the body to continuing self-review.

The Committee on Recognition, therefore, encourages an applicant accrediting body to identify in its application those policies, procedures, or practices which it believes require review with a view toward needed improvement and any plans proposed or implemented to accomplish such an analysis.

The Guide is organized into five parts:

1. General Information — Section 1

Includes information on the preparation of the application, site visits, costs of the recognition review, and a general schedule of the recognition review process.

2. Recognition Provisions and Procedures — Sections 2 and 3

Key to the process are the COPA *Provisions for Recognition,* which lead the materials in this section. In addition are supportive policies and procedures for the preparation of the application.

3. Committee on Recognition — Section 4

This committee is responsible for reviewing applications for initial and continued recognition and for monitoring accrediting bodies recognized by COPA. This section describes the role and functions of the Committee on Recognition.

4. Reader Consultants and Visitors — Section 5

Soon after the application is submitted, a mutually satisfactory reader-consultant or visitor will be selected from those listed in the pool to review the application. The materials in this section describe the role of the reader-consultant and, when necessary, the visitor.

Preparing for the Review

Date of Review

The dates of review are set for July and January each year by the Committee on Recognition. Each potential applicant for continued recognition is notified a year in advance of the expected review date. After receiving the notice of the accrediting body's intent to apply, a detailed schedule is provided.

Application

The response to a COPA provision that is most helpful to the reader-consultant and to the Committee on Recognition is one that does not merely cite an attached document, but presents information sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the provision.

Three (3) copies of the application and synopsis form (see Section 3 on "Supportive Procedural Materials"), and five (5) copies of the supporting documents are due in the COPA office six (6) months prior to the review. Requirements differ for initial applicants; see Section 2 on "Provisions and Procedures." The key word for the five (5) copies of documents supporting the narrative is "essential." Some are clearly essential—standards, evaluation procedures, Commission membership, etc.—and must be included in the material provided to each reviewer. Refer to the "Basic Supportive Materials for Accrediting Body Applications," which follows in Section 3. Some documents, often quite expensive to reproduce and mail (e.g., institutional self-studies, accrediting body projects, etc.), are supportive but **not essential** for each reviewer to have. One (1) copy of these is sufficient, and will be made available at the time of review.

The **three copies** of the application and synopsis form are to be on 8 1/2" x 11" paper and left looseleaf. They are not to be folded, three-hole punched, stapled or bound in any manner, but may be placed in a manila folder for safekeeping. In addition to the general information requested on the synopsis form, those who will be representing the accrediting body at the review should be listed.

Scope

Provision A.3. requires an accrediting body to apply for recognition of all postsecondary accrediting activities in which it is engaged. The Committee on Recognition needs a profile of all of the accrediting body's activities designed to evaluate the quality of postsecondary education. Further, the Committee's determination of the appropriate scope of the accrediting body's recognition will be helped by information about the maximum term for which the accrediting body grants accreditation, an estimate of the number of schools or programs in the U.S. which could be eligible to apply for accreditation, and the number of schools or programs which are accredited by the body. (See Section 2 for provisions related to the Change in Scope.)

Visits to the Accrediting Body

a. Staff Visits

To be as helpful as possible in the preparation for the review, the COPA staff is available to visit the accrediting body's headquarters at COPA expense. This type of visit will enable COPA staff to become more familiar with a particular situation and will enable the applicant to discuss the particulars of the review in a personalized format. Such a visit should be scheduled well before submission of the application.

b. Site-Visit

In the event that the Committee on Recognition determines that a site-visit by peers is necessary to observe important aspects of the accrediting activities, lists of scheduled accreditation visits and Commission meetings will be requested. For applicants for initial recognition, visits will be routinely scheduled for the reader-consultants to observe an institutional accreditation site visit and a Commission meeting.

Third-Party Testimony

The summer and winter issues of *Accreditation* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* plus other appropriate higher education publications will publish, in a standardized format, the list of accrediting bodies whose recognition review is due within six

(6) months. Public comments on these applicants are invited, and COPA will receive written statements about an application or written requests from persons who wish to appear and make oral comment at the review until two (2) months prior to the scheduled review. (A sample Public Notice is found at Section 3.)

Public Notice

While the renewal (or initial) status is being announced to the postsecondary education community, an announcement of the pending review and the date of the comment deadline should be placed in the newsletter or other association publication of the applicant. This announcement may be cited in the application response to Provision B.14. (Also refer to the COPA Policy on "Evaluation of Accrediting Activities by Institutions," found in the Part III of this handbook, under "Agency Guidelines.")

Review Session

The purpose of the review is to enable the Committee on Recognition to obtain whatever additional information it considers necessary in evaluating the application. The COPA Policy for Public Meetings which governs these review sessions may be found in Part III of this handbook, under "Operational Policies." The format for the review is outlined in the *Provisions and Procedures.*

Costs

The COPA procedures for obtaining recognition state that "the applicant accrediting body shall bear related costs." The time and travel of Committee on Recognition members and staff in preparing for and participating in the hearings are normal operating expenses of COPA and are not considered related costs. The following related costs have been identified.

A mutually satisfactory reader-consultant is recruited and paid for preparing a report on the application and is reimbursed for travel expenses related to participating in the review. The usual fee is $300 for continued recognition reviews and $600 for initial recognition reviews.

Also, should the Committee on Recognition determine that an accrediting body warrants a site-visit, it may nominate one or more visitors to attend a meeting of an accrediting body's Commission, to accompany an evaluation site-visit team, and/or to visit the accrediting body's offices. In the case of such a visit, the applicant will bear the expenses of the visitor(s). This is required routinely as part of the initial application process and may be required for continued recognition.

Finally, a small amount for direct clerical expenses such as postage and photocopying will be included as related costs in the total assessment.

While it is not possible to determine an exact figure for the related costs, reviews have averaged $500 to $700, and in no case have they exceeded $1,200. Because COPA recognition is granted for terms up to five years, these related costs should be considered as being amortized over the period of recognition. Payment of the assessment for related costs is due by June 30 following January reviews or by December 31 following July reviews.

General Schedule of the COPA Recognition Review Process

Schedule for Summer Review		**Schedule for Winter Review**
July of the year before the review	Accrediting body files a letter of intent to apply for COPA recognition	January of the year before the review
September	COPA sends accrediting body materials concerning the preparation of the application	March
September-November	Staff site-visit concerning preparation of the application—if requested by the accrediting body	March-May
December	Nomination and appointment of reader-consultants	June
January	Application and supporting materials due in COPA office; available for public review until one month before Committee on Recognition review session	July
January	Public notice of upcoming reviews placed in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Accreditation* by COPA; accrediting body places same in newsletter/association publication	July
February	Materials sent to reader-consultant	August
January-April	Site visit(s) by reader-consultant if Committee on Recognition determines the need	July-October
May	Reader-consultant report and third party testimony due in COPA office then forwarded to accrediting body for response; third party testimony available for public review until one month before Committee on Recognition review session	November
June	Accrediting body's response to the reader-consultant report and third party testimony due in COPA office	December
July	**Public review session with the Committee on Recognition**	January
August	Recommendation of Committee on Recognition forwarded to accrediting body for comment	February
September	Accrediting body accepts recommendation **OR** requests change; if change is requested, Committee on Recognition reconsiders at next meeting	March
October	Committee on Recognition submits recommendation to the COPA Board for final action **OR** reconsiders at next meeting	April
November	If change was requested, accrediting body submits additional information	May
November	Accrediting body receives notice of Board action concerning recognition	May
December	Payment of review expenses	June

Provisions for Becoming Recognized as an Accrediting Body for Postsecondary Educational Institutions or Programs

As the nongovernmental organization dedicated primarily to the improvement of postsecondary education in the United States through voluntary accreditation, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) reviews the accrediting practices of those bodies desiring recognition by the Council. Such review and recognition acknowledge accreditation's broad public responsibilities as well as the specific interests of the many groups affected by accreditation by: 1) helping to insure the integrity and consistency of accreditation policies and procedures; 2) encouraging continual improvement of accrediting practices; 3) providing guidance to institutions and programs about the status of bodies in the accrediting community; and 4) providing assurance about the accreditation status of institutions and programs to students, employers, state and federal agencies, and other interested groups.

Recognition by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation as an accrediting body for postsecondary educational institutions or programs is dependent on compliance with the following Provisions.

A.
To be considered for COPA recognition, an accrediting body

A1. Is a nongovermental body;

A2. Conducts specialized accreditation on a national basis; or conducts institutional accreditation on a national or regional basis;

A3. Applies for recognition of the full scope of the postsecondary accrediting activities for which it assumes responsibility;

A4. Accredits entire institutions that are primarily postsecondary, are properly licensed and chartered to operate, and confer postsecondary degrees, diplomas or certificates; or

accredits programs which are generally accepted as preparing for the entry level(s) into a profession or occupation; or

accredits units* in which such programs are offered;

A5. Describes in official public documents its full accrediting scope, evaluative criteria and procedures;

A6. Defines each accreditation status, including accreditation and any available pre-accreditation status;

A7. Has written procedures for each possible action which affects the accreditation of an institution or program;

A8. Is responsible for formulating its accrediting policies, procedures and criteria;

A9. Is solely responsible for the final decision on accreditation of an institution or program.

B.
To carry out its activities in the public interest, an accrediting body

B1. Provides evidence that its accreditation protects the interests of students, benefits the public, and improves the quality of teaching, learning, research and professional practice;

B2. Provides evidence that its policies, evaluative criteria, procedures and evaluative decisions are accepted by the appropriate communities of interest such as educators, educational institutions, other accrediting bodies, practitioners, employers, and public agencies;

B3. Develops and interprets its evaluative criteria to encourage institutional freedom and automony, the improvement of institutions and programs, sound educational experimentation and constructive innovation;

B4. Has effective, impartial and objective public representation in its evaluation, policy and decision making processes;

B5. Makes public a current listing of the accreditation or candidacy of all institutions or programs affiliated with it;

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*A unit is the college, school, department or other administrative body within an institution that is officially responsible for a program or programs.

B6. Makes public all final decisions granting or withdrawing the accreditation (or candidacy for accreditation) of institutions or programs, including decisions by institutions or programs to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation (or candidacy);

B7. Provides appropriate and fair procedures for considering and acting upon applications from institutions or programs;

B8. Provides appropriate and fair procedures for appeals from decisions refusing or terminating accreditation (or candidacy) of an institution or program, such procedures to include consideration by a body whose members did not participate in the original decision, and maintains the accreditation (or candidacy) status of the institution or program until completion of the appeal process;

B9. Has adopted policies defining what information about an institution or program it will reserve or keep confidential and what information it will make available to the public;

B10. Has mechanisms to provide public correction of incorrect or misleading statements about the accreditation status of an accredited (or candidate) institution or program, the contents of reports of site visitors and/or its accrediting actions;

B11. Responds to inquiries from the public about its activities and about its accredited (or candidate) institutions or programs;

B12. Makes available on request the academic and professional qualifications of individual participants in its activities, including the members of its policy and decision making bodies and its administrative personnel;

B13. Undertakes timely and appropriate analysis of its own objectives, criteria, policies and procedures to insure that they contribute to the purposes of accreditation and modifies them to achieve these purposes better and to meet changing conditions;

B14. Provides advance notice of proposed changes in its objectives, criteria and evaluating policies, giving opportunity for comment by affected persons, institutions and organizations;

B15. Permits an institution or program to withdraw an application for any status of accreditation (or candidacy) at any time before a final decision is made on that request;

B16. Permits an institution or program to withdraw from any status of accreditation (or candidacy) at any time.

C.
To follow accepted practices of post-secondary accreditation, an accrediting body

C1. Recognizes the right of an institution or program to be evaluated in the light of its own stated purposes, so long as these are consistent with purposes generally accepted as appropriate to postsecondary education and to the recognized scope of the accrediting body;

C2. Utilizes evaluative criteria and processes that judge (a) the appropriateness of institutional or program purposes, (b) the adequacy of resources and organization to meet those purposes, (c) educational outcomes which indicate that those purposes are met, and (d) the reasonable assurance of continued meeting of those purposes;

C3. Provides to institutions and programs appropriate consultative guidance about the accrediting process;

C4. Evaluates an institution or program for candidacy or initial accreditation only at the invitation of the chief executive officer of the institution involved; however, it will initiate a review of the accredited status of the institution or program when required;

C5. Requires as an integral part of its accreditation process a self-analysis of the institution or program and an on-site review by a visiting team, or a validated equivalent of an on-site review;

C6. Provides in its evaluation, policy and decision making processes an appropriate balance between academic and administrative personnel (if an institutional accrediting body), or an appropriate balance between educators and practitioners (if a specialized accrediting body);

C7. Confines its requests for data from institutions or programs to data directly related to the evaluation and accreditation processes;

C8. Collects data from institutions or programs by means which stimulate self-assessment and improvement and which make maximum use of information already available in the institutions or programs;

C9. Consults with the institution or program about the number and selection of site visitors and about the length of the visit;

C10. Provides evidence that its practices respecting the number of site visitors and visit length appropriately reflect the complexity of the institution or program being visited and the purposes of the visit;

C11. Appoints site visitors using procedures developed to select visitors who are: (a) qualified by academic training, professional experience and knowledge of the accrediting process; (b) sensitive to the uniqueness of individual institutions and programs; and (c) impartial, objective and without conflict of interest;

C12. Provides for the training and evaluation of site visitors;

C13. Encourages discussion during the on-site visit between site visitors and the faculty, staff, administrators, students and other interested parties;

C14. Provides opportunity and a reasonable period for the institutional chief executive and, in the case of a specialized accrediting body, the director of the program to comment on the report of the site visitors before final action is taken on the accreditation status of an institution or program;

C15. Provides to the institutional chief executive and, in the case of a specialized accrediting body, the director of the program a written evaluation report which the institution is free to distribute;

C16. Provides to the institutional chief executive and, in the case of a specialized accrediting body, the director of the program written notification of any decision affecting the status of the institution or program not later than one month following the decision, giving reasons for the action;

C17. Clearly distinguishes in the written report of the site visitors and in the communication of the final accrediting decision between: (a) statements speaking to actual or potential deficiencies in meeting criteria, and (b) statements offering advice to the institution or program;

C18. Provides reasonable checks and balances in its procedures to guard against: (a) accrediting an institution or program that does not meet its criteria; and (b) refusing to accredit an institution or program that does meet its criteria;

C19. Has the staff and financial resources to implement and maintain effective accrediting procedures.

D.
To meet its obligations as a COPA-recognized body, an accrediting body

D1. Advises COPA before effecting any change which will alter its status of COPA recognition;

D2. Provides evidence of continuing efforts to work with other COPA-recognized accrediting bodies in cooperative accrediting practices;

D3. Files regularly with COPA materials pertaining to its activities and complies with requests by COPA for other data or information.

In considering the above Provisions, the following COPA policy statements are most relevant. The full texts of these policies are found in Part III of this handbook.

- Bylaws of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (adopted April 17, 1987)
- Public Meetings

- Evaluation of Accrediting Activities by Institutions
- Disclosure, Confidentiality and the Integrity of the Accrediting Process
- Interagency Cooperation
- Accreditation and the Public Interest
- Joint Statement on Transfer and Award of Academic Credit
- Off-Campus Credit Programs
- Accreditation of Graduate Education
- Trustee Involvement in the Accreditation Process
- Rights and Responsibilities of Accrediting Bodies and Institutions in the Accrediting Process
- Principles of Good Practice in Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status
- Accreditation and Authorization of Distance Learning Through Telecommunications
- Validity and Reliability of Accrediting Body Standards and Process

Application Procedures for Organizations Seeking Initial Recognition

Adopted April 15, 1988

An organization seeking initial recognition must comply with the *Provisions for Recognition* and undergo a two-phase process which shall involve the assignment of two reader-consultants and no fewer than two review sessions with the Committee on Recognition before referral to the COPA Board for consideration. An initial application fee of $2,000 is required.

The basic purpose of the initial recognition process is to help ensure that accreditation serves the interests of students, the professions, the postsecondary education community, and the general public in an efficient and effective manner. These interests are best served if accrediting functions are established or expanded in areas only when a need for accreditation in relation to the interests of these constituencies can be demonstrated. Although the assessment of need is complex, it must be carried out in regard to the following basic principles: 1) accrediting structures and processes should not fragment the educational process but should contribute to the concept of education as an integration of disciplines into a meaningful whole; and 2) duplication of accrediting in the same general area is to be avoided since it invites inconsistent and contradictory standards and accrediting actions and thus leads to confusion on the part of students, institutions, and the public.

1. Letter of Intent

The chief executive officer shall send an official letter with the $2,000 application fee to COPA expressing the intent of the organization to seek initial recognition. The letter shall be received at least six (6) months before a next meeting of the Committee on Recognition to allow time to set the schedule for recognition review. Besides the application fee of $2,000, the applicant organization shall bear related costs of the foregoing procedures including expenses for the reader-consultants. Related costs shall not include the normal meeting of the Committee on Recognition.

2. Nomination of Reader-Consultants

The Committee on Recognition will nominate reader-consultants to observe an on-site visit and a meeting of the organization's decision-making body. All visits shall be conducted in accordance with procedures outlined in the COPA policy, "Guidelines for Visits to Accrediting Bodies Engaged in the COPA Recognition Process." In addition, the reader-consultants will be responsible for considering all written materials generated by the recognition process and will prepare a report.

3. Response to Reader-Consultant Nominations

After receiving the reader-consultant nominations, the organization has 30 days in which to notify COPA if any nominees are unacceptable for cause. Such persons may be eliminated from further consideration. Failure to respond within 30 days validates the persons nominated.

4. Nomination of Reviewers

Members of the Committee on Recognition will normally serve as the reviewers for all applicants. If adjunct members are required for any review session, such members will be added in accordance with procedures established by the Committee.

The organization will be provided with the names of Committee members proposed as reviewers. The reviewers will be responsible for considering all written materials generated by the recognition process.

5. Response to Reviewer Nominations

After receiving reviewer nominations, the applicant organization will have 30 days in which to notify COPA if any nominees are unacceptable for cause. Such persons may be eliminated from further consideration. Failure to respond within 30 days validates the persons nominated.

6.
Application Materials

The initial recognition process is divided into two phases with two review sessions no less than six months apart. Phase I is focused on the demonstration of need for the proposed accreditation as covered under Provisions A.1 through B.2. Phase II is focused on the capacity of the organization to operate effectively and efficiently as covered under Provisions B.3 through D.3. Materials in support of all the *Provisions for Recognition,* A.1 through D.3, are to be submitted at least six months before the first scheduled review session. The burden of proof is on the applicant organization to meet all the provisions in the process.

Specifically with respect to Provisions B.1. and B.2, the applicant organization must demonstrate that the need is clearly recognized and that the proposed accreditation is strongly supported by the following constituencies as appropriate:

a. Chief executive officers of the postsecondary institutions affected by the accreditation
b. Deans, directors, and faculty of specific educational programs subject to the accreditation
c. Affected student groups
d. Professionals and professional organizations in the field to be accredited
e. Employers of graduates of the educational programs
f. Groups representing related disciplines and professions
g. Organizations carrying out accreditation in the same or closely related areas
h. Agencies with responsibilities for professional certification or licensure, state educational planning and coordination, or similar functions
i. Interested publics as reflected in responses to a call for comment

At least six months before the first scheduled review, the applicant organization will submit in seven (7) copies a narrative account of the organization's compliance with each provision for recognition, as well as essential supporting documents. Refer to policy statement, "Basic Supportive Materials," in Section 3.

The format for the reports will be 8 1/2" x 11" looseleaf. Materials and documents not 8 1/2" x 11" in size will be labeled and enclosed for easy reference. Refer to the *Guide to the Recognition Process* for additional information.

7.
Appointment of Reader-Consultants and Reviewers

Following the receipt of an organization's application, the reviewers and reader-consultants will be notified of their selection, and the organization will be notified of the final appointment.

8.
Visits to Applicant Organizations

Visits to applicant organizations will be conducted at least two months before the scheduled review.

9.
Public Notice

COPA will publish notice of the organization's scheduled reviews in *Accreditation* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Notices of summer reviews will appear in the previous winter newsletter, winter reviews in the previous summer issue; notices in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* will appear no later than four months before the scheduled reviews.

An organization being reviewed should provide notice of its reviews to its various publics, (e.g., chief executive officers, program/discipline heads, those in the profession and the general public). Since third party testimony must address the organization's compliance with COPA provisions, public notices should indicate that copies of these can be secured from the COPA office.

Notices will follow a standard format consisting of the organization's name, scope for which applying, date of reviews, and final date of receipt of third-party comment. COPA will not publish any other information concerning the reviews. (See the sample Public Notice in Section 3.)

10.
Petition for Third-Party Comment at Reviews

Not later than two months before each scheduled review, any third party wishing to offer oral testimony at the organization's review must submit a statement indicating those parties which it represents and outlining in detail the substance of its proposed testimony. Such comments must address the organization's compliance with specific COPA provisions.

11.
Written Third-Party Comment Submitted

Not later than two months before each scheduled review, third parties wishing to offer written comment must submit such a statement. This statement must identify the parties represented by such comment and must address the organization's compliance with specific COPA provisions.

12.
Reader-Consultant Reports Submitted

Not later than two months before a scheduled review, the reader-consultants will submit a report concerning their visits following an outline published in COPA's "Guidelines for Visits to Accrediting Bodies Engaged in the COPA Recognition Process." The reader-consultants will also submit a report on Phase I and Phase II of the organization's application.

13.
Access to Applications and Third-Party Comment

An organization's application and materials submitted by third parties will be available in the COPA office for public review. COPA will not distribute or release these materials. The reader-consultant reports are considered confidential documents of the evaluative process and are unavailable for public review until after the recognition decision is made by the COPA Board.

14.
Materials Sent to Reviewers

The following materials will be forwarded to the reviewers not later than one month before the scheduled review:

a. Narrative section of the application and essential supporting documentation
b. Third-party written comment or written outlines of oral testimony
c. Reader-consultant report(s)
d. COPA *Provisions and Procedures for Recognition*
e. Instructions for reviewers

15.
Materrials Sent to and Response of Applicant Organization

At the time materials are sent to reviewers, the organization will be sent copies of any third-party comment, reports of the reader-consultants, and a detailed schedule of the review session. Upon receipt of these materials, the organization is encouraged to submit a response in advance of the meeting of the Committee on Recognition regarding the reader-consultant reports and third-party comment.

16.
Consideration by the Committee on Recognition

Approximately three months prior to the semiannual meeting of the COPA Board, the Committee on Recognition will meet to consider Phase I or Phase II of the organization's application. Each review will follow this order:

a. Oral presentation by representative(s) of the organization
b. Question-and-answer period between reviewers and representative(s) of the organization concerning the materials and testimony submitted
c. Comment on the site visits and Phase I or Phase II of the application by the external reader-consultants
d. Oral third-party testimony, if any
e. Response of organization's representative(s) to written or oral third-party comment
f. Summary comments of the organization's representative(s) and the reviewers

The Committee will consider only those materials, testimony and comment relevant to COPA's *Provisions for Recognition* and presented in accordance with these procedures.

17. Recommendations of the Committee on Recognition

The Committee on Recognition will then convene in executive session to discuss its findings and prepare a written report. For Phase I of the process, the report will be shared with the applicant organization and the COPA Board for its information. For Phase II of the process, the same will apply except the report will include the Committee's recommendation to the Board concerning initial recognition.

Following Phase I of the application process, the Committee on Recognition may report its satisfaction, or defer action pending one or more the following:

a. Receipt of additional information to determine compliance with specified *Provisions for Recognition*, A.1 through B.2

b. Response to concerns about failure to meet COPA *Provisions for Recognition*, A.1 through B.2

c. Response indicating the correction of deficiencies outlined by the Committee on Recognition

Following Phase II of the application process, the Committee on Recognition will prepare recommendations for the COPA Board. Possible recommendations are as follows:

a. Recognition for five years

b. Recognition for five years with a request for interim report(s) to the Committee on Recognition indicating progress in the correction of deficiencies

c. Recognition for three years with provisions stipulated

d. Defer action pending one or more of the following:

   (1) Receipt of additional information by the Committee on Recognition to determine compliance with COPA *Provisions for Recognition*

   (2) Response to the concerns of the Committee on Recognition about failure to meet COPA *Provisions for Recognition*

   (3) Response indicating the correction of deficiencies outlined by the Committee on Recognition

e. Denial of the application for initial recognition

The recommendation for recognition will include assignment by the Committee on Recognition to the appropriate COPA Assembly. (See "Classification of Accrediting Bodies," in Part III of this handbook, "Operational Policies.")

After Committee review of the final written recommendation, this recommendation is forwarded to the applicant organization at least two (2) months before the COPA Board meeting.

18. Consideration of Committee on Recognition's Recommendations by the Applicant Organization

The applicant organization is provided opportunity to respond to the recommendation formulated by the Committee on Recognition. This response should deal with erroneous conclusions based upon errors of fact or interpretation and/or new developments which address concerns raised by the Committee on Recognition.

19. Applicant Organization's Response to the COPA Office

The organization will forward its written response to the report of the Committee on Recognition to the COPA office within 30 days of receipt of the report. The response may be to: (a) accept the recommendation, or (b) request a change in the recommendation. If the applicant requests a change in the recommendation, the matter will be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee on Recognition. In case of deferral, the applicant must provide a written response along with documentation, if appropriate, to support the requested change at least three months prior to the next meeting of the Committee on Recognition.

20.
Consideration of the Organization's Response

If the organization agrees with the recommendation of the Committee on Recognition, the recommendation will be forwarded to the COPA Board for action. If the organization disagrees with the recommendation, the case will be reconsidered by the Committee on Recognition at its next meeting, and a final recommendation will be submitted to the Board.

21.
COPA Board Action

Upon receiving the recommendation, the COPA Board will hear a report from the Chair of the Committee on Recognition and take action on the recommendation.

22.
Notification of Action to Applicant

Promptly following Board action, the organization will be provided with a complete text of the action taken as well as specific details of any additional obligations the Board has required of the organization.

23.
Response to Deferral and Requests for Reports

If an application is deferred or if the Committee on Recognition requests interim reports, the organization will respond to the Committee as directed and the Committee will consider the application or interim report at its next regular meeting following the scheduled receipt of the materials.

24.
Procedures Regarding Petition for Review of Adverse Decisions

When a serious disagreement arises concerning an action of the Committee on Recognition or the COPA Board which cannot be resolved through normal COPA recognition procedures, the organization will follow COPA's "Procedures Regarding Petition for Review of Adverse Decisions."

25.
Publication of Recognition Actions

Board Recognition actions taken by the Board of Directors will be published by COPA.

Application Procedures for Organizations Seeking Continued Recognition

1. Notification by COPA

The Committee on Recognition will plan review schedules for each year, and recognized accrediting bodies shall be notified by COPA staff of pending reviews for renewal of recognition. This notice will be given at least twelve (12) months prior to the panel review and fifteen (15) months before the scheduled final COPA Board action.

2. Letter of Intent

The accrediting body shall send COPA a letter of intent to proceed with an application for recognition. This letter shall be filed with the COPA office within 60 days of COPA's notice. Following receipt of the letter of intent, COPA staff will assign the schedule for recognition review.

3. Nomination of Visitors

For accrediting bodies seeking continued recognition, visits to observe an on-site institution/program review and/or a meeting of the accrediting commission may or may not be necessary. Should the regular review of the accrediting body or other circumstances appear to necessitate such a visit, the Committee on Recognition will inform the accrediting body and will nominate a visitor(s).

All visits to accrediting bodies shall be conducted in accordance with procedures outlined in "Guidelines for Visits to Accrediting Bodies Engaged in the COPA Recognition Process" in Section 5.

4. Response to Visitor Nominations

After receiving visitor nominations, the accrediting body shall have 30 days in which to notify COPA if any nominees are unacceptable for cause. Such persons may be eliminated from further consideration for being visitors. Failure to respond by the deadline date shall validate the slate nominated.

5. Nomination of Reviewers and Reader-Consultants

The members of the Committee on Recognition shall normally serve as the reviewers for all applicant accrediting bodies. If it becomes necessary to add adjunct members for any review session, such members will be added in accordance with procedures established by the Committee.

The applicant organization will be provided with the roster of Committee members proposed as reviewers. The Committee on Recognition shall also nominate an outside reader-consultant.

The reviewers and the reader-consultant shall be responsible for considering written materials generated by the recognition process.

6. Response to Reviewer and Reader-Consultant Nominations

After receiving reviewer and reader-consultant nominations, the accrediting body shall have 30 days in which to notify COPA if any nominees are unacceptable for cause. Such persons may be eliminated from further consideration for these positions. Failure to respond by the deadline date shall validate the slate nominated.

7. Materials Submitted

At least six months before the scheduled review, the accrediting body shall submit an application for recognition. An application shall consist of a narrative account of the accrediting body's compliance with each provision for recognition as well as essential supporting documents. Refer to policy statement, "Basic Supportive Materials," in Section 3.

The accrediting body shall submit three (3) copies of the application with five (5) sets of supporting documentation. The format for all materials is 8 1/2" x 11" looseleaf unbound paper. Non-standard size materials, such as bound handbooks and procedural statements, should be enclosed in labeled, unsealed envelopes.

8.
Appointment of Visitor(s), Reviewers, and Reader-Consultant

Following the receipt of an accrediting body's application, the COPA staff, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee on Recognition, shall notify the visitor(s), reviewers, and reader-consultant of their selection and shall notify the accrediting body.

9.
Visits to Accrediting Bodies

Visits to accrediting bodies shall be conducted two to six months prior to the scheduled review.

10.
Public Notice

The COPA staff shall publish notice of the accrediting body's scheduled review in *Accreditation* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Notices of summer reviews will appear in the previous winter newsletter, winter reviews in the previous summer issue; notices in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* shall appear no later than four months prior to the scheduled review.

An accrediting body being reviewed should provide notice of its review to its various publics, (e.g., chief executive officers, program/discipline heads, those in the profession and the general public). Since third-party testimony must address the accrediting body's compliance with COPA provisions, public notices should indicate that copies of these can be secured from the COPA office.

Notices shall follow a standard format consisting of the accrediting body's name, scope, date of review, and final date of receipt of third-party comment. COPA shall not publish any other information concerning the review. (See a sample Public Notice in Section 3.)

11.
Petition for Third-Party Comment at Review

Not later than two months before the scheduled review, any third party wishing to offer oral testimony at the accrediting body's review must submit a statement indicating those parties which it represents and outlining in detail the substance of its proposed testimony. Such comments must address the accrediting body's compliance with specific COPA provisions.

12.
Written Third-Party Comment Submitted

Not later than two months before the scheduled review, third parties wishing to offer written comment must submit such a statement. This statement must identify the parties represented by such comment and must address the accrediting body's compliance with specific COPA provisions.

13.
Visitor Reports Submitted

Not later than two months before the scheduled review, the visitor(s) shall submit a report following an outline published in COPA's "Guidelines for Visits to Accrediting Bodies Engaged in the COPA Recognition Process," in Section 5.

14.
Reader-Consultant Report Submitted

Not later than two months before the scheduled review, the reader-consultant shall submit a report on the accrediting body's application.

15.
Access to Applications and Third-Party Comment

An accrediting body's application and materials submitted by third parties shall be available in the COPA office for public review. COPA shall not distribute or release these materials. The reader-consultant and visitor reports are considered confidential documents of the evaluative process and are unavailable for public review until after the recognition decision is made by the Board.

16.
Materials Sent to Reviewers

The following materials shall be forwarded to the reviewers not later than one month before the scheduled review:

a. Narrative section of application and essential supporting documentation
b. Third-party written comment or written outline of oral testimony
c. Reader-consultant report
d. Visitor(s) report
e. COPA *Provisions and Procedures for Recognition*
f. Instructions for reviewers (see "The Role of Reviewers for Agency Applications," in Section 4)

17.
Materials Sent to Accrediting Bodies

At the same time materials are sent to reviewers, the accrediting body shall be provided copies of any third-party comment, visitor and reader-consultant reports, and a detailed schedule of the review session.

18.
Consideration by the Committee on Recognition

Approximately three months prior to the semiannual meeting of the COPA Board, the Committee on Recognition shall meet to consider the accrediting body's application. The review shall follow this order:

a. Oral presentation by accrediting body representative(s) to reviewers
b. Question-and-answer period between reviewers and accrediting body representative(s) concerning the materials and testimony submitted
c. Comment on the application by reader-consultant
d. Comment from visitor(s), if any
e. Oral third-party testimony, if any
f. Accrediting body response to written or oral third-party comment
g. Summary review between accrediting body representatives and reviewers

The review shall consider only those materials, testimony, and comment relevant to COPA *Provisions for Recognition* and presented in accordance with these procedures.

19.
Recommendations of the Committee on Recognition

The Committee on Recognition shall then convene in executive session to discuss its findings and prepare a written report containing recommendations for the Board.

The Committee on Recognition may either:

a. Request a visit to determine compliance with COPA provisions
   Such a request shall defer the Committee's recommendation for six months, and such visits and review shall follow procedures outlined in items 3, 4, 9, 13, 17, and 18 of this section. During the period of deferral, no "public comment" shall be made concerning the circumstances leading to the visit.
   OR
b. Prepare recommendations for Board action on applications for recognition
   Possible recommendations of the Committee are:
   (1) Recognition for five years
   (2) Recognition for five years with a request for interim report(s) to the Committee on Recognition indicating progress in the correction of deficiencies
   (3) Recognition for three years with provisions stipulated
   (4) Action deferred pending one or more of the following:
      (a) Receipt of additional information by the Committee on Recognition to determine compliance with COPA *Provisions for Recognition*
      (b) Response to the concerns of the Committee on Recognition about failure to meet COPA *Provisions for Recognition*

(c) Response indicating the correction of deficiencies outlined by the Committee on Recognition

(5) Denial of the application for recognition

The recommendation for recognition will include assignment by the Committee on Recognition to the appropriate COPA Assembly. (See "Classification of Accrediting Bodies," in Section 4.)

After Committee review of the final written recommendation, this recommendation is forwarded to the applicant accrediting body at least two months before final Board action.

20. Accrediting Body's Consideration of Committee on Recognition Recommendations

The applicant accrediting body is provided opportunity to respond to the recommendation formulated by the Committee on Recognition. This response should deal with erroneous conclusions based upon errors of fact or interpretation and/or new developments which address concerns raised by the Committee on Recognition.

21. Accrediting Body's Response to the COPA Office

The accrediting body shall forward its written response to the report of the Committee on Recognition to the COPA office within a month of receipt of the report. The response may be (a) the acceptance of the recommendation of the Committee, or (b) a request for a change in the recommendation. If there is a request from the applicant for a change, the case shall be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee on Recognition, during which time COPA recognition shall be continued. In the case of a deferral, the applicant must provide a written response along with documentation, if appropriate, in support of the requested change at least two months prior to the next Committee on Recognition meeting.

22. Consideration of Accrediting Body Response

If the accrediting body agrees with the Committee on Recognition recommendation, the recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for action. If the accrediting body disagrees with the recommendation, the case will be reconsidered by the Committee on Recognition at its next meeting, and a final recommendation shall be submitted to the Board.

23. Board Action

Upon receiving recommendations, the COPA Board shall hear and take action on the recommendations of the Committee on Recognition.

24. Notification of Action to Applicant

Promptly following the Board action, COPA staff shall provide the accrediting body with a complete text of the action taken as well as specific details of any additional obligation the Board has required of the accrediting body.

25. Response to Deferral and Requests for Reports

If an application is deferred or if the Committee on Recognition requests interim reports, the accrediting body shall respond to the Committee as directed, and the Committee shall consider the application or interim report at its next regular meeting following the scheduled receipt of materials.

26.
Procedures Regarding Petition for Review of Adverse Decisions

When a serious disagreement arises concerning an action of the Committee on Recognition or the COPA Board which cannot be resolved through normal COPA Recognition Procedures, the accrediting body shall follow COPA's "Procedures Regarding Petition for Review of Adverse Decisions," found in this section.

27.
Publication of Recognition Action

Actions on recognition shall be published by COPA.

28.
Costs of Recognition

The applicant accrediting body shall bear related costs of the foregoing procedures including expenses for the reader-consultant and the visitor(s) if they are required to visit an accrediting body, program, or institution during the review. Related costs shall not include the normal meeting of the Committee on Recognition.

Change of Scope of COPA Recognized Accrediting Bodies

A. Policies

1. **Definition.** Change in scope of COPA recognition is defined as a change in the activities of an accrediting body which requires alteration of the statement of scope in the COPA recognition action to make that statement a correct description of the body's accrediting activities.

2. **Approval of change in scope.** The accrediting body must request and receive COPA approval for change of scope before effecting the change. COPA approval is to be based on the accrediting body's conformity with COPA recognition provisions were the change to be effected, and is given by formal action of the COPA Board. The accrediting body may withdraw without prejudice its request for change of scope at any time before the COPA Board takes action on the request.

3. **Effecting change in scope before COPA approval.** If an accrediting body changes its scope before COPA approval has been given, the accrediting body is not in conformity with the COPA recognition provisions, and its COPA recognition is therefore in jeopardy. The provisions of the policy on accrediting bodies acting in violation of COPA recognition provisions apply in such a case.

B. Procedures

1. An accrediting body shall notify the COPA office at the point at which it is contemplating the possibility of a change of scope in order that the staff may provide consultative help as the change is being considered.

2. As soon as plans for the change are reasonably firm, the accrediting body shall submit an application for the change in scope to the COPA office. The application shall include:
   a. A description of the proposed addition to (or deletion from) the accrediting body's currently recognized activities as stated in the most recent COPA recognition action
   b. Material supplementing the accrediting body's most recent submission to COPA seeking recognition. The supplementary material should address each of the COPA recognition criteria for which the change in scope will change the information previously submitted. Recognition provision information that is unchanged by the change of scope may simply be noted as unchanged.
   c. Specification of the time at which the accrediting body wishes to effect the change in scope. COPA will seek to consider the change and provide a decision in a timely fashion, but the time at which the COPA decision is reached will depend strongly on the information provided to COPA and when the information is provided, as well as the requirements of public notice.

3. Upon receiving information from the accrediting body, COPA staff will:
   a. Review the information for completeness, and notify the accrediting body whether additional information is necessary or desirable
   b. Schedule the review of the request for change of scope and publish notice of the scheduled review in accordance with procedure 10 of the "Application Procedures for Organizations Seeking Continued Recognition," in this section
   c. Assign two members of the Committee on Recognition as primary and secondary reviewers
   d. Send the materials submitted by the accrediting body to a reader-consultant

4. The reader-consultant will prepare an analysis detailing the compliance of the accrediting body with the COPA criteria for recognition. Immediately upon completion, the analysis will be sent to the reviewers along with the information provided by the accrediting body. The analysis will also be sent to the accrediting body.

5. The Committee on Recognition shall conduct a hearing on the proposed change of scope if:
   a. The accrediting body requests a hearing
   b. Third-party objections to the proposed change in scope are submitted to the Committee on Recognition
   c. The Committee's reviewers request a hearing (see 6 below)

If a hearing is held, it shall follow the Committee's usual pattern for a hearing on recognition of an accrediting body.

6. If the accrediting body does not request a hearing, and if no third-party objections have been submitted, the Committee's reviewers, having examined the accrediting body's information and the reader-consultant's analysis, may either (a) recommend to the Committee that the change in scope be approved, or (b) request that a hearing be conducted (see 5c above).

7. The Committee on Recognition will arrive at its recommendation following the hearing (if one is held) or following receipt of the recommendation of its reviewers. The Committee's recommendation will be submitted to the accrediting body for comment before it is sent to the COPA Board for consideration and action.

8. The Committee on Recognition may make such administrative adjustments in these procedures as required to accomplish the purposes of this policy.

C.
Cost of Application for Change of Scope

The COPA Board of Directors has determined that recognized accrediting bodies applying for a change of scope will be assessed a fee to include a $300 payment to the reader-consultant and other direct costs + 15%.

Procedures Regarding Petition For Review of Adverse Decisions

An adverse decision regarding recognition by COPA shall be defined as denial of initial or renewed recognition, revocation of recognition, or denial of a request for change of scope.

In the event of an adverse decision by the Board, the accrediting body may petition for review of the decision on the grounds that the Board has ruled erroneously by disregarding its own provisions for recognition, failing to follow its stated procedures, or failing to consider all the evidence and documentation presented in favor of the application. Should there be petition for review, certain procedures will apply:

A. Not later than 30 days from the date of an adverse decision, the accrediting body shall notify the President of COPA in writing of its intention to petition for review of the decision, and not later than 60 days from the same date it shall submit documentation supporting such petition.

B. The Chairman of the Council, with approval of the Executive Committee, shall then appoint a hearing panel comprising five persons, none of whom shall be members of the Board.

C. The hearings shall be held at a mutually convenient time and place and shall be conducted in accord with due process.

D. The hearing panel may either affirm the Board's decision or recommend to the Board that it reconsider the decision, giving reasons in either case.

E. The status of any member shall remain unchanged during the review and there shall be no public notice of the adverse decision until the review is completed and the Board has finally determined the matter.

F. The petitioning accrediting body shall bear the cost of any transcript which it requests.

G. The Board shall provide a procedure for the equitable distribution of all other costs incurred by a petition for review.

Policies and Procedures Regarding Complaints

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is concerned about the improvement and sustained quality of postsecondary education, but it is not a clearinghouse or mediator for consumer complaints against institutions or programs of study, nor do such complaints fall within COPA's mandate. COPA will, however, receive and attempt to mediate certain appropriate complaints against its recognized accrediting bodies submitted by institutions or programs.

If the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation ascertains that a complainant has instituted litigation against an accrediting body concerning which a complaint has been made, no action will be taken on the complaint while the matter is *sub judice*.

Complaints Concerning Alleged Violations of a Member's Criteria or Procedures

An appropriate complaint for this purpose is defined as one involving issues between an institution or program and a COPA member concerning alleged violations of a member's criteria or procedures, but does not include a dispute about a finding of fact by the member accrediting body.

I. Without Documentation

A complaint against a member accrediting body must be accompanied by documentation showing that all remedies for resolution through the accrediting body's own processes have been exhausted. Failure to be specific when filing a complaint with COPA against a recognized accrediting body will result in the following:

A. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged;
B. Copies of all material received will be sent to the accrediting body against which the complaint is being made; and
C. No further action will be taken by COPA.

II. With Documentation

Receipt of an appropriate complaint with documentation that the complainant has exhausted all administrative remedies for complaints resolution provided by the accrediting body will result in a specified series of actions.

A. A letter of inquiry will be sent by the President of COPA to the chief executive of the accrediting body against which the complaint is lodged asking for verification that the complainant has utilized all the processes afforded by the accrediting body. A copy of this letter shall go to the complainant.
B. If the accrediting body acknowledges that the complainant has exhausted all remedies through that body, it will be asked to supply COPA with a summary of actions which led to the original complaint.
C. Upon receipt of a member's response to COPA's inquiry, the President shall encourage the parties to resolve their differences. If the differences are not so resolved in a reasonable time and they appear to be substantial, the President of COPA shall appoint three members of the COPA Board to investigate the complaint. Such investigation might include, but does not have to include, a visit(s) to the site(s) of the alleged violation or to the headquarters of the accrediting body against which the complaint was lodged, and such hearings as may be deemed necessary.
D. This three-person investigation panel shall have access to any and all information pertinent to its investigations, including transcripts or minutes of official proceedings by the member accrediting body.
E. A report of the investigation and the findings shall be forwarded to the Executive Committee along with any recommendations. The Executive Committee shall then report to the Board its recommendations regarding the complaint.
F. The Board shall be the body of final authority.

Policy on Activities in Violation of Recognition Provisions

Recognition by COPA of an accrediting body represents a finding by COPA that the body acts in conformity with the recognition provisions of COPA. Should COPA find that an already recognized accrediting body is acting out of conformity with the recognition provisions, the COPA recognition of that accrediting body is in jeopardy until its activities are brought into conformity with the COPA provisions. Following a finding that activities are not in conformity with the recognition provisions, COPA will specify a time by which the accrediting body shall bring its activities into conformity. Failure to bring activities into conformity with the recognition provisions by the time specified by COPA will result in loss of COPA recognition. Following is the procedure for complaints that a recognized accrediting body is acting out of conformity with COPA recognition provisions:

I. Conditions necessary for the complaint to be considered:

A. A complaint addressed to the COPA office that a recognized accrediting body is acting out of conformity with COPA recognition provisions will be considered only if:

1. The complainant documents that all remedies provided by the accrediting body's own processes have been pursued;
2. The complaint is made in writing with the complainant identified;
3. The complainant permits the complaint and complainant to be identified to the accrediting body;
4. The complaint identifies clearly the accrediting body and the manner in which the activities are believed to be not in conformity with the COPA recognition provisions.

B. If the complaint includes matters that are currently the subject of, or directly related to, litigation in which the accrediting body is a principal, COPA will not proceed with consideration of the complaint until such litigation is settled. COPA may weigh the results of such litigation in its considerations.

II. Staff review:

A. Upon receipt of a complaint, the COPA staff will transmit to the complainant a copy of this COPA policy statement and procedure on activities in violation of recognition provisions, and will inform the complainant that the matter will be considered only if it meets all of the requirements in items I.A. and I.B. of the procedure. If the response from the complainant meets these conditions, the staff will then forward the complaint to the accrediting body with a request that the body respond to the complaint in writing.

B. If upon receipt of the accrediting body's response the COPA staff concludes that the complaint is unfounded or that the accrediting body has corrected its activities so as to settle the complaint, it will provide a written report on the complaint to the Committee on Recognition at the Committee's next meeting. If the Committee disagrees with the staff finding, it will request further action, as outlined below. Otherwise, the Committee will note that the complaint has been settled and will ask the staff to so notify the complainant.

C. If upon receipt of the accrediting body's response the COPA staff concludes that there is reason to believe the complaint is well founded, the staff shall undertake such activities as are appropriate and necessary to get the most complete information and documentation possible concerning the complaint and the accrediting body's activities pertaining to the complaint, and to develop a written report for the next meeting of the Committee on Recognition. The staff report shall *not* contain a staff finding on whether the accrediting body is in violation of COPA recognition provisions. The report shall be sent to the accrediting body with a request that a written response to the information in the report be provided for the meeting of the Committee on Recognition.

III. Formal consideration by Committee on Recognition:

A. The Committee on Recognition shall consider the complaint, accrediting body response(s), and the COPA staff report at the meeting following completion of the staff study. The Committee on Recognition shall make a finding whether the accrediting body is in violation of COPA recognition provisions.

B. If the Committee's finding is that the accrediting body is not in violation of COPA recognition provisions, the accrediting body and complainant shall be so notified by the COPA staff, and the complaint shall be regarded as settled.

C. If the Committee's finding is that the accrediting body is in violation of COPA recognition provisions, the Committee shall establish a time by which the accrediting body shall bring its activities into conformity with COPA recognition provisions. The accrediting body and complainant shall be notified of this finding.

Intra-Agency Complaints

Should there be complaint(s) by one recognized accrediting body against another recognized accrediting body, the resolution procedure shall be conducted informally. Accrediting body representatives will be convened by COPA to discuss the matter of contention and to work out a mutually acceptable solution to the problem.

Costs of Complaint Pleadings

The Board shall provide a procedure for the equitable distribution of costs in the processing, investigation, and resolution of all complaints.

Synopsis*

SAMPLE

1. COPA Designation: ____________________
2. Organization: ____________________
3. Name of Accrediting Body: ____________________
4. Title of Administrative Officer: ____________________
5. Recognized Scope of Accreditation**: ____________________
6. Other Activities: ____________________
7. Number of Institutions/Programs (universe): ____________________
8. Current Number Accredited: ____________________
9. Previous Recognition: ____________________
10. Special Circumstances: ____________________

Agency representatives planning to be present at the review:

Name: ____________________ Title: ____________________

Name: ____________________ Title: ____________________

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*Please return three (3) copies with the application materials for continued recognition and seven (7) copies with the application for initial recognition.

**For agencies seeking continued recognition, the scope is written as it appeared in the most recent recognition action. If the accrediting body is conducting other postsecondary accrediting activities, a change of scope must be requested. (See "Change of Scope of COPA Recognized Accrediting Bodies," in Section 2.)

Basic Supportive Materials for Accrediting Body Applications

At least six months before the scheduled review, an accrediting body submits an application for recognition. This application consists of (a) a narrative account of the accrediting body's compliance with each provision, and (b) essential documents supporting the narrative. Three (3) copies of the application are required and five (5) of the supporting documents (seven [7] copies of all materials for initial applicants).

The key word for the documents **supporting** the narrative is "essential." It is imperative that the reader-consultant and the primary and secondary reviewers designated by the Committee on Recognition have those materials which provide the clearest understanding of the standards, policies, procedures, and practices of the applicant accrediting body.

The following materials have been found to be **essential** for rigorous review of an application:

1. Articles of incorporation and/or charter or other legal organizational document
2. Constitution and/or Bylaws
3. Handbook (Guide, Manual, etc.) on Accreditation (Some accrediting bodies have a single comprehensive document which includes standards, policies, procedures, guides for self-study, etc. Others have separate manuals for various aspects of the accreditation process, e.g., one for self-study, another for policies and procedures. The reviewers should have copies of all manuals used by the accrediting body, including manuals for chairs, manuals for evaluators, manuals for site-visits, etc., if these are not found in the basic handbook.)
4. Material on pre-accreditation status(es), if not included in the Handbook or other manuals
5. Policies, procedures, etc., not included in the Handbook or manuals
6. Roster of current Commission (Accreditation Committee, Council, Board) members—names, affiliations, and brief, pertinent academic and professional information (no curricula vitarum)

   (In those instances in which the major reviewing body's actions are not final, but subject to review or ratification by another body—Board, Executive Committee, etc.—a list of members of that body, with affiliations, should be provided.)
7. Sample of minutes of a Commission meeting at which institutional/program reviews have been considered
8. Sample of accrediting action letters sent to institutions (two or three only)
9. List of accredited members and those in pre-accredited status (If they are in a larger document, e.g., an Annual Proceedings or Directory, do not send a separate list. Include document and reference at appropriate places in application.)
10. Sample of form used, if annual or other periodic report is required
11. Sample current newsletter, or other regular official communication between the accrediting body and its members
12. Audited financial statement

Other Materials

1. The guidelines suggested do not forbid the accrediting body from including other materials. Unique purposes and needs may dictate the inclusion of additional materials to provide evidence of support for a particular provision. The key word again is "essential," rather than "superfluous." The application itself should define clearly, cogently, and succinctly the activities of the accrediting body as they relate to specific provisions; supportive materials, if included, should be **substantively** necessary to an understanding of the accrediting body's work. Copies of general correspondence are unnecessary.
2. Some documents, often quite expensive to reproduce and mail (accrediting body research, examples of institutional/programmatic self-studies) may be supportive,

but are **not essential** for each reviewer to have. One (1) copy of these is sufficient, and will be made available in the COPA office up to one month prior to the review, and at the time of review for members of the Committee on Recognition who wish to examine the materials. In addition, if the reader-consultant or Committee members specifically request additional materials for their perusal, the accrediting body will be asked to provide these.

If in doubt about whether to include a particular item, a call to COPA staff members may be of help.

COPA Public Notice

In keeping with COPA procedures for recognition, the applicant is required to provide public notice in compliance with Application Procedure 10, Public Notice. The notice should include the date of the scheduled review, the deadline for receipt of third party testimony (two months prior to the review), and the date until which third party testimony will be available for public review (one month prior to the Committee on Recognition review). A sample public notice follows.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation periodically reviews the procedures and practices of its member accrediting bodies. Accrediting bodies seeking continued recognition are scheduled for review in July 1987 in Washington, D.C. Deadline for receipt of third party comment or request to present oral testimony is May 15, 1987. Comments must be addressed specifically to an applicant's compliance with COPA's *Provisions for Recognition,* which may be obtained from the COPA office. An accrediting body's application and materials submitted by third parties shall be available in the COPA office for public review until June 15, 1987. Third party comment or request for appointment should be sent to the attention of Dr. Gloria Chernay, COPA, One Dupont Circle, N.W, Suite 305, Washington D.C. 20036, (202) 452-1433.

Applications for Continued Recognition

Commission on Accrediting/Association of American Bible Colleges... "colleges that offer baccalaureate degrees aimed at preparing students for Christian ministries through Biblical, church/vocational, and general studies."

Boards of Review for Baccalaureate and Higher Degree, Associate Degree, Diploma, and Practical Nursing Programs/National League for Nursing..."associate, baccalaureate, and higher degree programs; also diploma and practical nurse programs."

Accrediting Commission/National Home Study Council..."home study institutions."

Accrediting Commission/Association of Advanced Rabbinical and Talmudic Schools..."rabbinical and Talmudic schools which offer rabbinical degrees, ordination, and appropriate undergraduate and graduate degrees in the field of rabbinical and Talmudic education."

Instructions for Third Party Testifiers to the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

SAMPLE

Please be advised that your request to appear and give oral comments to the COPA Committee on Recognition considering the application of __________ has been approved. The review for (accrediting body) will be held (date) at (place) in (room) at (time).

The purpose of the review is to enable the Committee on Recognition to obtain whatever information it considers necessary from the applicant accrediting bodies and others who may be appearing. It is not an opportunity for presenting parties who may have an interest in the pending application to debate among themselves. The chairman will begin the review by recognizing representatives of the agency seeking recognition, the reviewers, and the reader-consultants. Then the chairman will recognize third parties to give oral comments. Comments should be limited to five minutes, so that the Committee will have time to ask questions directly. After this, the chairman may receive the additional clarifying oral comments from the applicant to complete the review. Formal recommendations for recognition will be prepared by the Committee on Recognition in executive session.

In preparation for the review, you are requested to submit a statement to the COPA office no later than two months before the scheduled review, or (date). The statement should indicate those parties which it represents and outline in detail the substance of the proposed testimony. As COPA recognition is granted on the basis of an agency's compliance with the specific criteria listed in the enclosed provisions, your written (and subsequent oral) comments must address such.

If we may provide further information at this time, please feel free to call.

Enclosure: Provisions and Procedures for Becoming Recognized as an Accrediting Body for Postsecondary Educational Institutions or Programs

Authority, Scope, and Structure of the Committee on Recognition

The Committee on Recognition reviews applications of organizations proposing to engage in accreditation of postsecondary institutions or programs, examines relevant information, conducts hearings, and consults and informs persons about such applications. It evaluates the current performance of recognized accrediting bodies and advises the Board on matters of criteria and procedures in connection with the recognition process. The list of current members of the Committee can be found in Part I of this handbook, in the section on Standing Committees.

Membership, Appointment, and Terms of Office

COPA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7:01:

> *There shall be a Committee on Recognition composed of nine members. The Chairperson shall be a member of the Board and shall be elected by the Board. The remaining members shall be appointed by the Board from outside the membership of the Board. Each of the following groups shall be represented by two members of the Committee:*
>
> 1. *The Assembly of Insitutional Accrediting Bodies*
> 2. *The Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation*
> 3. *The Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies*
> 4. *The public*
>
> *The Chairperson and other members of the Committee shall serve for two years and shall be eligible for appointment to one additional term. They shall take office on July 1 following their appointment.*

Organizational Procedures

1. Each assembly will recommend at least two people to the Nominating Committee of the Board for membership on the Committee on Recognition.
2. In making recommendations consideration should be given to persons with experience in the recognition process. Prior Board or Recognition Committee service shall not affect eligibility for membership or reelection.
3. Members of the committee shall serve for two years and be eligible for reelection for a second term.
4. Public members for the Recognition Committee may be recommended by the Assemblies, by Board members, or by other interested organizations. They should be persons who have had experience in recognition or accreditation, but cannot be persons who currently hold positions with accrediting associations or who are staff or faculty members of postsecondary education institutions.

Duties

COPA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7:02:

> *Under policies and criteria established by the Board, the Committee on Recognition shall review applications of organizations proposing to engage in accreditation of postsecondary institutions or educational programs, examine relevant information, conduct hearings, and consult and inform persons about such applications. The Committee shall also evaluate the current performance of recognized accrediting bodies and may offer recommendations concerning the continuance of the recognition. The Committee shall advise the Board on matters of criteria and procedure in connection with the recognition process. After conducting its review of an organization, the Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board.*
>
> *The Committee shall also recommend changes in the Council's recognition provisions and procedures, recommend fees for the recognition process, approve review schedules, appoint ad hoc review panels and reader/consultants and make recommendations concerning interagency cooperation in accreditation.*

Meetings

COPA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7:03:

> *The Committee on Recognition shall meet as may become necessary. Meetings of the Committee shall be called by the Chairperson. A majority of the membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.*

Reporting

COPA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7:04:

> *The Committee on Recognition shall report to the Board at each of the Board's annual meetings, and at other regular or special Board meetings as may become necessary.*

Compensation

COPA Bylaws, Article VII, Section 7:05:

> *Members of the Committee on Recognition shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as committee members.*

Guidelines for the Committee on Recognition Relative to Recognition Actions

Under policies and criteria established by the Board, the Committee on Recognition is the peer evaluation body within COPA for reviewing applications of organizations proposing to engage in accreditation of postsecondary institutions or educational programs. The COPA bylaws (Sec. 7:02) prescribe that the Committee shall "examine relevant information, conduct hearings, and consult and inform persons about such applications...evaluate the current performance of recognized accrediting bodies and...offer recommendations concerning the continuance of the recognition. (It) shall advise the Board on matters of criteria and procedure in connection with the recognition process. After conducting its review of an organization, (it) shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board."

In fulfilling this mandate, the Committee on Recognition schedules periodic recognition review sessions for petitioning accrediting bodies. These hearing sessions are open to the public. The following procedures are observed:

Physical Setting

The furniture in the meeting room is arranged in an open-square, with Committee on Recognition members and COPA staff on three sides and accrediting body representatives (no more than three) on the fourth side. Observers will be seated, as space permits, in the area beyond the conference table.

Order of Review

1. Immediately prior to each hearing, the Committee will meet in executive session for a brief discussion of questions and issues identified by the reviewers and reader-consultant as essential for Committee examination.

2. The Chairperson of the Committee will then convene the hearing. The Chairperson has the normal prerogatives in conducting the hearings, recognizing parties, receiving comments, etc. The following order, however, is the norm:
   a. Oral presentation by accrediting body representatives
   b. Question-and-answer period between the Committee reviewers and accrediting body representatives concerning the materials and testimony submitted
   c. Comment on application by reader-consultant
   d. Comment from site visitor, if any
   e. Oral third-party testimony, if any
   f. Accrediting body response to written or oral third-party comment
   g. Summary review between accrediting body representatives and reviewers

Executive Session

The Committee on Recognition then convenes in executive session to discuss its findings and determine what action to take. The Committee may either (1) request, in the case of previously accredited bodies, a visit to determine compliance with COPA provisions (see Procedure 19), or (2) prepare a recommendation for Board action on the application.

Possible recommendations of the Committee are:

1. Recognition for five years
2. Recognition for five years, with a request for interim report(s) to the Committee on Recognition indicating progress in the correction of deficiencies
3. Recognition for three years, with provisions stipulated
4. Action deferred for one year, pending one or more of the following:
   a. Receipt of additional information by the Committee to determine accrediting body compliance with COPA Provisions
   b. Response to the concerns of the Committee about failure to meet COPA Provisions
   c. Response indicating the correction of deficiencies outlined by the Committee
5. Denial of the application

Responsibilities of Committee Members for Review Sessions

Primary and Secondary Reviewers: The specific responsibilities of those appointed as primary and secondary reviewers for a particular accrediting body are detailed in the Committee on Recognition statement on "The Role of Primary and Secondary Reviewers."

All Committee members: Members of the Committee on Recognition are responsible for:

1. Being thoroughly familiar with the COPA recognition process, including the *Provisions and Procedures for Becoming Recognized as an Accrediting Body for Postsecondary Educational Institutions or Programs*
2. Understanding that the purpose of the recognition process is to determine the degree of compliance with COPA provisions by the petitioning accrediting body
3. Understanding that there is no prescribed manner in which an accediting body must meet the intent of a particular provision, and therefore Committee members must determine whether the accrediting body's response is a valid approach to fulfilling the requirement of a provision
4. Being thoroughly familiar prior to the hearing with all documented evidence submitted by the accrediting body, third parties, reader-consultant, and site visitor (if latter is required)
5. Attempting during the review session to clarify issues and seek the additional information essential to render a competent judgment on the application
6. Recognizing that a hearing is not a trial, that participants are not antagonists, and that a review session should avoid even the appearance of confrontation with any of the participants or among Committee members
7. Assuring that written recommendations provided to the petitioning accrediting bodies clearly delineate problem areas and unmistakably support the actions recommended

The Integrity of the Process

Beyond these essential procedural responsibilities, the integrity of the process requires awareness of and attention to issues of broader concern. One is guarding against conflict of interest. Any circumstance which raises questions concerning the potential objectivity of a Committee member and inability to render an impartial decision on an accrediting body's application constitutes a threat to the recognition process. Accrediting bodies are provided an opportunity to notify COPA if any members of the Committee are unacceptable to the accrediting body. There may also be other circumstances which a member of the Committee believes to be an actual conflict of interest or capable of being perceived as such. The member should then withdraw from participation in the discussion and/or action on the accrediting body involved or request that the Chairman of the Committee make a ruling.

Related to this is the necessity for guarding against personal bias and/or idiosyncratic interpretations of provisions or criteria. Scrupulous objectivity in judgments and evaluations not only assures the integrity of the process and provides the fairest hearing for an accrediting body, but minimizes the possibility of justifiable challenge of the Committee's findings and recommendations.

Finally, Committee members must maintain strict confidence in matters pertaining to deliberations of the Committee. Disclosure of individual opinions or personal views expressed in executive session violates both the process and the persons involved in it. The final written reports are the documents that speak for the entire Committee on Recognition. Inquiries about recommendations or actions should be referred to the COPA staff or the Committee chairperson.

The Role of Reviewers for Accrediting Body Applications

To facilitate an in-depth analysis and discussion of the materials relevant to an accrediting body's application, two members of the Committee on Recognition are designated as special reviewers for each application being considered at a particular recognition review session. The reviewers are designated as "primary" or "secondary" to indicate order of responsibility and participation.

Before Review

Copies of all materials related to the accrediting body's application will be forwarded to the reviewers well in advance of the review session. These materials will include:

1. Narrative section of the accrediting body's application and essential supporting documents
2. Third-party written comment or outline of oral testimony
3. Reader-consultant's report
4. Site-visit report (if required)

Reviewers are asked to study these materials in relation to the COPA provisions for recognition.

The primary reviewer assumes the responsibility for:

1. Contacting the secondary reviewer prior to the review session to determine issues and areas which require examination
2. Notifying the accrediting body of specific issues of concern at least two weeks prior to the review, if the reviewers determine the need
3. Placing before the Committee on Recognition a proposed action during the executive session following review (see "After Review," below)

Review Session

At the review session, approximately one hour is set aside to review each application. The Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition will provide an opportunity for a brief oral presentation by accrediting body representatives.

The reviewers will then initiate and guide the discussion by questioning the accrediting body representatives concerning the materials and testimony submitted and by probing issues that appear to be unclear or in need of further elaboration.

This will be followed by comment by the reader-consultant, and comment by the site visitor(s), if an accrediting body visit has been required, and third-party testimony and accrediting body response.

After Review

Upon the conclusion of the review session, the Committee on Recognition will go into executive session for a brief review of the discussion and preliminary consideration of the recommendation of the reviewers.

The motion should include:

- a. One of the actions stipulated in No. 19 of the Procedures (in Section 2)
- b. An indication of the provisions with which the accrediting body appears to be in noncompliance, questionable or marginable compliance
- c. Items to be addressed and due dates of interim report(s), if required
- d. Additional comments or suggestions, not significant for recognition but potentially helpful for accrediting body improvement

(See sample letters which follow for suggestions on form and content.)

Final action on the recommendation of the reviewers will normally be taken at the Committee's executive session on the day following recognition review sessions.

Once the Committee has adopted a recommendation concerning the accrediting body's application, it is the responsibility of the primary reviewer, in consultation with the secondary reviewer, to develop the motion in written form. (See following letters for examples.)

This written recommendation will be incorporated in the initial draft of the letter that the COPA staff will develop for accrediting body review. Members of the Committee will receive copies of the initial draft and will contact the COPA office with suggestions for revision or to approve the draft. The final written recommendation will be forwarded to the applicant accrediting body at least one month before final Board action.

Sample Letter for Initial Recognition Review

(Date)

(Address)

Dear Dr. ____________________

Thank you for your cooperation during the recent review of your organization by COPA's Committee on Recognition.

On (date), the Commitee on Recognition met in executive session and developed a recommendation for recognition. In doing this the Committee reviewed your application, the findings of the outside reader, the report of the Committee on Recognition members designated as primary and secondary reviewers, and the matters considered during the public session on (date). The recommendation follows:

Title of Accrediting Body

The Committee on Recognition recommends that the Council grant initial recognition for a period of five years to the (accrediting body). The scope of this recognition is accreditation of (institutions and/or programs) offering (diplomas/certificates/ degrees) in (field of study). This recognition includes membership and participation in the (Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies/Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies).

The Committee further requests that the (accrediting body) submit a report to the COPA office by (date), detailing the progress that has been made (in correcting specific deficiences). Continued recognition requires the submission of a satisfactory report.

••••

COPA's procedures provide opportunity for an accrediting body to respond to the Committee's recommendation. A written response must be sent to the COPA office by (date). Under COPA's procedures the response may be either (a) acceptance of the recommendation of the Committee, or (b) a request for a change in the recommendation.

If the recommendation of the Committee is accepted, it will be placed before the COPA Board of Directors for action at the meeting of (date).

If there is a request for a change, the recommendation will be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Committee on Recognition. A detailed written document supporting the request for a change must be received in the COPA office not later than (date). This detailed written document should deal with erroneous conclusions based upon errors of fact or interpretation and/or new developments which address concerns raised by the Committee on Recognition.

•••

The Committee on Recognition intends that the review of an organization's accrediting activities be thorough and fair, and that the recognition procedures help accrediting bodies in improving the quality of the accreditation process. We hope that this intent has been realized in the review of your application. If you have any questions or need additional information about the recommendation or COPA procedures, please call or write the COPA office.

Sincerely,

(Name of Chairperson)
Chair, Committee on Recognition

Sample Letter for Continued Recognition Review

(Date)

(Address)

Dear Dr. ______________

Thank you for your cooperation during the recent review of your organization by COPA's Committee on Recognition.

On (date), the Commitee on Recognition met in executive session and developed a recommendation for recognition. In doing this the Committee reviewed your application, the findings of the outside reader, the report of the Committee on Recognition members designated as primary and secondary reviewers, and the matters considered during the public session on (date). The recommendation follows:

Title of Accrediting Body

The Committee on Recognition recommends that the Council grant continued recognition for a period of five years. The scope of this recognition is accreditation of (write out scope). This recognition includes membership and participation in the (Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies/Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies).

The Committee further requests that the Accrediting Commission:

- submit an interim report due (date), demonstrating compliance with Provision (number) of the July, 1987, Provisions which requires (statement from provisions);
- revise the (accrediting body) Directory of Accredited Schools to list separately or otherwise designate member schools that do not offer postsecondary courses and programs, and to note that COPA recognition is for postsecondary purposes only;
- publish in a single document the standards, policies and guidelines related to accreditation by the (accrediting body);

  and
- delete from its written procedures the statement, "The Commission has the right to edit or alter the (examining committee) report for the official record after the Examining Committee has presented it."

•••

COPA's procedures provide opportunity for an accrediting body to respond to the Committee's recommendation. A written response must be sent within a month of receipt of this recommendation, and will be expected in the COPA office by (date). Under COPA's procedures the response may be either (a) acceptance of the recommendation of the Committee, or (b) a request for a change in the recommendation.

If the recommendation of the Committee is accepted, it will be placed before the COPA Board of Directors for action at the meeting of (date).

If there is a request for a change, the recommendation will be reconsidered at the next meeting of the Committee on Recognition. A detailed written document supporting the request for a change must be received in the COPA office not later than (date). This detailed written document should deal with erroneous conclusions based upon errors of fact or interpretation and/or new developments which address concerns raised by the Committee on Recognition.

•••

The Committee on Recognition intends that the review of an organization's accrediting activities be thorough and fair, and that the recognition procedures help accrediting bodies in improving the quality of the accreditation process. We hope that this intent has been realized in the review of your application for continued recognition. If you have any questions or need additional information about the recommendation or COPA procedures, please call or write the COPA office.

Sincerely,

(Name of chairperson)
Chair, Committee on Recognition

The Role of Adjunct Members on the COPA Committee on Recognition

Preface

Twice each year, the Committee on Recognition meets to: (a) consider general business related to the recognition process; (b) conduct recognition reviews; and (c) develop recommendations concerning accrediting body recognition for COPA Board action. More specifically, the Committee typically meets over a three-day period, conducting two executive (closed) sessions and one recognition review (open) session.

In the **first day** executive session, a typical agenda includes: procedural and policy development, final formulation of the recognition recommendations for which accrediting bodies requested a change in the recommendation for Board action, and discussion of accrediting bodies involved in the preapplication process.

The **second day** is devoted to the reviews of accrediting bodies. Brief executive sessions follow each review for consideration of preliminary recommendations.

An additional executive session is held on the third day. At this meeting, the Committee formulates recommendation statements to be sent to each accrediting body reviewed the day before and conducts any new or leftover business from its executive session held on the first day.

Definition and Role of Adjunct Members

There are at least two types of Adjunct Members who can be appointed by the Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition.

1. An Adjunct may be asked to **take the place of a Committee member** who is unable to be present. He/she will be provided with all the review and other materials given to the Committee on Recognition. In executive sessions, the Adjunct may participate in discussion but may not vote on any general or continuing business of the Committee. He/she will participate in discussions and **will vote** on recognition recommendations relating to the agencies being reviewed at that meeting.
2. If a review schedule requires additional sessions, an Adjunct may be asked to **augment the Committee during the review process.** He/she will be provided the review materials for one or more accrediting bodies and will be asked to attend the specific review session(s) and the executive session of the Committee the following day. During the review and executive sessions, an Adjunct may participate in discussions and vote on recommendations relating to those accrediting bodies with which he/she was provided review materials and assigned review responsibility.

Reimbursement

Adjunct Members are reimbursed for any expenses incurred related to the meetings of the Committee.

Review of Interim Reports

COPA's periodic review of its recognized accrediting bodies is designed to identify responsible and reputable associations upon which the users of accreditation may rely. In fulfilling its continuing responsibility for overseeing these associations, the COPA Board may on occasion request that an accrediting body submit a report between scheduled reviews in order to clarify an accrediting body's compliance with one or more of the COPA *Provisions for Recognition*.

Action by the Committee on Recognition and the Board on an interim report cannot directly change the status of the accrediting body's recognition by COPA. However, all interim reports are linked to actual recognition, i.e., submission of a satisfactory report is a condition of continued recognition for the period of time designated by the Board at the last review, and, if this condition is not met, COPA will conduct an interim full review to determine whether and under what circumstances recognition is to be continued.

•••

Two members of the Committee on Recognition are designated as special reviewers for each interim report being considered by the Committee. The reviewers are designated as "primary" and "secondary" to indicate order of responsibility and together recommend under what circumstances recognition is to be continued.

Interim reports may be reviewed (1) at an executive session of the Committee on Recognition or (2) at a scheduled public hearing.

Executive Session Reviews

As a general rule, interim reports will be received and considered by the Committee on Recognition in executive session, with no appearance or presentation by accrediting body representatives, third-party testimony or public comments.

The primary reviewer assumes the responsibility for contacting the secondary reviewer prior to the executive session to determine issues and areas of review and placing before the Committee a proposed action.

Once the Committee has adopted a recommendation concerning the report, it is the responsibility of the primary reviewer, in consultation with the secondary reviewer, to develop the recommendation in written form. This recommendation will be brought to the Board for final action. (See sample letters which follow.)

Public Hearings

The Committee on Recognition may determine that in certain circumstances a review should be public. In addition, if the reporting accrediting body or an interested third-party requests an opportunity to comment, the Committee will determine whether a hearing should be held.

Such a review, however, will be a hearing on the interim report itself, and will be rigorously circumscribed to the issues the Board has stipulated are to be addressed in the report.

At the hearing, the Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition will provide an opportunity for a brief oral presentation by accrediting body representatives and oral third-party testimony, if any. The reviewers will then initiate and guide the discussion by questioning the accrediting body representatives concerning the issues addressed in the report.

Upon conclusion of the public hearing, the Committee on Recognition will go into executive session for a brief review of the discussion and preliminary consideration of the recommendation of the reviewers. Development of the recommendation will normally take place at the Committee's executive session on the day following recognition review sessions.

•••

Possible recommendations of the Committee are:

1. To find the report satisfactory and responsive to the concerns of the Board.
   This finding denotes that the accrediting body's recognition is to be continued for

the period originally designated by the Board. The Council, however, reserves the right to review at any time that circumstances may require.

2. To defer action on the report pending receipt of additional information by the Committee to determine compliance with COPA Provisions.
3. To find the report generally adequate and responsive, but request that the accrediting body submit a further report at a specified date showing further progress in the correction of deficiencies.
4. To find the report unsatisfactory or unacceptable, e.g., because the information provided is deemed unresponsive or inadequate in addressing the Board's concerns. This finding may lead the Committee to make one or both of the following recommendations:
   a. To request an accrediting body visit to determine compliance with COPA Provisions.
   b. To recommend accelerating a full review of the accrediting body to a scheduled recognition review session, where a change in recognition may be acted upon, if necessary.

Sample Letter for Interim Report

Date

Address

Dear Dr. ________________:

At its meeting on (date), the Committee on Recognition reviewed the interim report submitted by the (accrediting body) concerning Provision A.4., staff and financial resources to maintain effective evaluation and reevaluation services, and Provision E.2., advises COPA of any procedural or organizational changes...which might affect its accrediting activities or its recognition status.

The Committee on Recognition is recommending to the COPA Board that the report be accepted. Action by the COPA Board will take place at its meeting (date) in (location).

The Committee reminds the (accrediting body) that action of the Board in (year) called for one more interim report which is due in the COPA office in (date). Continued recognition requires the submission of a satisfactory report.

Sincerely,

(Name of Chairperson)
Chair, Committee on Recognition

Sample Letter for Interim Report

Date

Address

Dear Dr.__________:

At its meeting on (date), the Committee on Recognition reviewed the interim report submitted by the (accrediting body) concerning Provision B.4., making public all final accrediting actions. The Committee has deferred action on the interim report pending assurance that final negative actions of the Commission are published in public documents. This information should be received by the COPA office no less than two months prior to the next meeting of the Committee on Recognition, or (date). Continued recognition requires the submission of a satisfactory report.

The COPA staff stand ready to assist you in this matter.

Sincerely,

(Name of Chairperson)
Chair, Committee on Recognition

Guidelines for Reader-Consultants Engaged in the Recognition Process

Purpose of the Review

Reviews by reader-consultants are carried out as part of the COPA recognition process to determine an accrediting body's compliance with the COPA *Provisions for Recognition,* and are therefore directed toward the generic qualities of accreditation as well as the distinctive features of a particular discipline or type of accrediting body.

The major task of the reader-consultant is to make a rigorous comparison of the accrediting body's application with the requirements of the *Provisions,* in order to:

1. Ensure that each provision has been adequately addressed and documented
2. Identify and address apparent deficiencies in compliance with certain provisions
3. Evaluate the consonance between the agency's proposed scope of accrediting activities and the evidence provided of its acceptance by the important communities of interest specified in Provision B.2.

Additional Information

The reader-consultant should feel free to request from the COPA office clarification or supplementary information regarding an accrediting body's materials.

The Report

The report may quote from an accrediting body's application and supporting documentation, both of which are made available for public inspection in the COPA office.

The report is to conclude with a summary of any issues about which some question was raised by the application or supporting documents, noting particularly any apparent deficiencies in the accrediting body's compliance with specific provisions.

Review

If the Committee on Recognition determines that the reader-consultant's presence at the review is essential, the COPA staff will effect necessary arrangements. As a general rule, the reader-consultant does participate in the public review session and in executive sessions.

General Timetable for Reader-Consultants

Schedule for Summer Review		**Schedule for Winter Review**
September	COPA presents Reader-Consultant Pool to agency for approval	March
December	Nomination and appointment of Reader-Consultant	June
February	Application materials (including primary and supplementary documents) sent to Reader-Consultant	August
May	Reader-Consultant report due to COPA office	November
May	COPA distributes Reader-Consultant report to the accrediting body	November
June	COPA distributes Reader-Consultant report to the Committee on Recognition	December
June	Accrediting body requested to respond in writing to Reader-Consultant report in order to avoid any potentially time-consuming comment period during the course of the review. This response is shared with the Reader-Consultant and Committee members.	December
July	The Committee on Recognition meets three days approximately three months before the semi-annual COPA Assembly and Board meetings. Reader-Consultants are asked to join the Committee at the following times: **First Day** • **Executive session** with Committee on Recognition concerning particulars of review the following day (or, for initial applicants, the same day) • **Dinner** with Committee **Second Day** • **Executive sessions** - preceding and following each hearing • **Review session** - see Provisions and Procedures for order of review • **Lunch** with Committee	January

NOTE: Immediately following the reviews, Reader-Consultants should submit to COPA expenses related to the preparation of the report and travel.

Guidelines for Visits to Accrediting Bodies Engaged in the COPA Recognition Process

The application procedures for accrediting bodies seeking initial or continued recognition specify that, if visits to such bodies are required by the Committee on Recognition, these visits shall be conducted in accordance with procedures established by the Committee on Recognition, including those involving confidentiality. The Committee may appoint a single visitor or a team of visitors. The nomination, appointment, and general duties of the visitors are outlined in COPA's Provisions and Procedures. These supplemental guidelines are intended for use by COPA representative(s) designated to carry out such visits.

Visits to Accrediting Bodies Seeking Initial Recognition

The purpose of the visit to an accrediting body seeking initial recognition is to gather objective data and well-grounded impressions regarding the organization. The site-visitor will observe an on-site visit and a meeting of the accrediting body's commission, and will capitalize upon all feasible opportunities to observe other characteristic operations of the accrediting body, e.g., in consultative processes, training and briefing of visiting teams. The Committee on Recognition will rely heavily on presentations in context, and the report developed by the site visitor should provide a clear and coherent account of fact and impressions relating to the accrediting body's actual operations from its official base.

A typical site-visit will be developed as follows:

1. Upon designation as a site visitor, each evaluator will carefully review the *Provisions and Procedures for Becoming Recognized as an Accrediting Body for Postsecondary Educational Institutions or Programs* and the COPA policies relevant to the recognition process.
2. With the assistance of the COPA staff, the visitor will arrange the logistics of the visit—date, travel options, and lodging if a usual two-day visit is scheduled. Visits will normally be conducted two to six months prior to a scheduled review or Committee on Recognition executive session. The COPA staff will make arrangements with the accrediting body for reimbursements for expenses and other costs of the visit, in accordance with COPA *Provisions and Procedures.*
3. Well in advance of the visit (two to six weeks), visitors will communicate with the accrediting body by letter, confirming travel plans and logistical aspects of the visit, and identifying key accrediting body personnel who should be available for interview. The accrediting body's application should include all materials essential for review as specified in "Basic Supportive Materials for Accrediting Body Applications." If other materials are needed **prior to the visit,** this letter should include a list of these items, as well as a list of those that should be available **at the time of the visit.**
4. In final preparation for the visit, the evaluator will study application materials if they have been submitted by the accrediting body to determine the apparent degree of compliance with COPA's Provisions.
5. The visitor will (a) interview agency personnel, such as the executive director, professional staff, and members of the governing board, etc., in order to derive a sense of philosophy, commitment, and competence; (b) review available materials both for substantive data and for information that will help in making professional judgments on such matters as the organization's stability, effectiveness of operation, responsiveness and timeliness of correspondence and action, and scope of engagement; and (c) follow through the documentation of at least two sample and representative accreditations, noting the review process, selection of evaluators, nature of decision-determination, and quality of final reports.
6. Before departure, the visitor(s), will provide an opportunity for the accrediting body to make any further statement or invite attention to any matter not addressed earlier in the visit. The visitor(s) may also offer advice on any further preparation the accrediting body might accomplish before the Committee review takes place, but must do so without in any way indicating final evaluative judgment or prospective recommendation.

7. Immediately upon return, or in any case within two weeks of the visit, the visitor (or chair of the visiting team in correspondence or conference with other members of the team) will prepare a **report** to be presented to the COPA office no later than two months prior to the scheduled review. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee on Recognition with considered professional judgment based upon the best data available. The report, organized according to COPA Provisions, should be succinct, objective, and illustrated as specifically as possible. It will be shared with the accrediting body in advance of the review.
8. Once the report is submitted to the Committee and responses have been made to any questions raised, the special responsibility is completed. Further correspondence or communication with the affected accrediting body will be the responsibility of the COPA staff on behalf of the Committee on Recognition.

Visits to COPA-Recognized Accrediting Bodies

For accrediting bodies seeking continued recognition, visits may or may not be necessary. Provisions are made for visits to these organizations should the regular review of the accrediting body or other circumstances appear to necessitate an evaluation of developments, changes, or concerns relevant to the accrediting body's continued recognition. Such visits are usually evaluations focussed on certain aspects of an accrediting body's activities. The role of the visitor is to evaluate the area(s) specified in the focus of the visit, and to provide the Committee on Recognition with the information it requires. The purpose of the visit dictates the scope of activities to be pursued, and will mean that:

1. The data the visitor needs to gather are more circumscribed than those required for a comprehensive evaluation, and efforts are to be focussed on gathering these.
2. The restricted focus of the visit will determine the accrediting body personnel who will be interviewed, the files that will require examination, the accrediting operations that need to be observed, etc.
3. The report will be directed primarily to the area(s) of focus.
4. While the logistical elements detailed for visits to accrediting bodies applying for initial recognition will generally apply to a focussed visit, such modifications as are necessary will be worked out by the COPA staff and the accrediting body.

In the event that the Committee on Recognition determines that the evaluation of the accrediting body must be a full and comprehensive review, visits required by the Committee will conform to the pattern described for visits to accrediting bodies seeking initial recognition.

Travel Insurance

Visitors are eligible for travel insurance while conducting COPA business (e.g., site visits, commission meetings, Committee on Recognition meetings, etc.). Maximum coverage is $150,000.

Policies and Guidelines of the Council

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Introduction

Contained in this handbook are four kinds of COPA statements, two of which are policies and two of which are guidelines.

Operational

Those policies, internal or external, which affect the way the Board, the Board Committees, the Assemblies, and the staff are formed and/or conduct their business. Internal operational policies are those which control or affect the internal operation of the Board, the Board Committees, the Assemblies, and the staff; external policies are those which directly affect other COPA constituencies. Internal operational policies may involve consultation with other constituencies before adoption; external operational policies require consultation with affected constituencies before adoption.

Testimonial

Those policies adopted by the Board as public position statements. They require as much consultation among COPA constituencies as time allows—full consultation wherever possible—but in the case of an emergency, procedures must be sufficiently flexible to allow such policies to be adopted on short notice by the Board, or by the Executive Committee on behalf of the Board.

Interagency

Those guidelines which affect directly the interrelationship of member accrediting bodies in accrediting activities. (COPA Recognition Provision E.1.) Such guidelines, designed to encourage interagency cooperation and good practices in accreditation, require full consultation with all member accrediting bodies, with due time allowed for consideration by and response from them and, wherever possible, the Assemblies.

Agency

Those guidelines which affect or relate to how individual member accrediting bodies carry out their own mission and accredit their own members. Such guidelines are directly relevant to and consistent with COPA recognition provisions. They require full consultation with all member accrediting bodies and with the Assemblies, with due time allowed for consideration and response, before final adoption by the Board.

Bylaws

COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITATION APRIL 17, 1987

Preamble

Accreditation is a unique time-tested feature of American postsecondary education. Its purposes are to maintain and improve the quality of educational performance and safeguard the public from educational programs of unacceptable quality and from inadequate educational practices. These goals are achieved through voluntary associations of educators and other professional persons. These associations provide careful scrutiny of educational practices and impose sanctions; yet they operate in ways consistent with traditional autonomy and freedom of individual schools, colleges and universities.

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (the Council) plays a leadership role in the accreditation process. Its task is to monitor the accrediting process and insure that, as it is carried on by the various accrediting bodies, it is conducted effectively and responsibly in the interests of the students who are being educated and of the general public.

The Council's governance reflects and is consistent with the traditional autonomy and academic freedom of institutions of higher education and other postsecondary educational institutions. This autonomy requires that the educational institutions collectively exercise substantial control over the accrediting process, as is consistent with its self-regulatory character. The Council's governance also insures the involvement and acceptance of responsibility for accreditation and its coordination by postsecondary institutions and programs as represented by responsible academic officials.

Full and equitable participation and involvement of educational institutions, institutional and specialized associations, national postsecondary educational organizations and representatives of the public provide unity and integrity to the Council's structure. This results in an effective forum for institutional and specialized accrediting associations and national postsecondary educational organizations to deal with their mutual and separate concerns in accreditation and to formulate, debate, forward and implement policy positions.

Finally, the Council establishes standards and procedures by which accrediting bodies are recognized, or by which such recognition is withdrawn, and provides an appropriate means for dealing with issues of overriding public interest and concern in accreditation.

ARTICLE I
Name, Seal, and Offices

Sec. 1:01. Name.

The name of this organization is the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as the "Council").

Sec. 1:02. Seal.

The seal of the corporation shall be circular in form and shall bear on the upper portion of the outer circle the title of the Council and on the lower portion of the outer circle the words "Washington, D.C." In the center of the seal shall appear the words "Corporate Seal." The Board of the Council (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") may change the form of the seal or the inscription thereon at its discretion.

Sec. 1:03. Offices.

The principal office of the Council shall be located in Washington, D.C. In accordance with the laws of the District of Columbia for non-profit corporations, the Council may have other offices within or without the District of Columbia as the Board may from time to time determine.

ARTICLE II
Purposes

The Council is a non-profit corporation organized under the District of Columbia Non-Profit Corporation Act exclusively for educational, scientific, research, mutual improvement, and professional purposes and shall have the necessary and incidental powers to carry out its corporation purposes, among which shall be to:

1. Promote, improve, and assure the quality and diversity of postsecondary education in the United States.
2. Review and recognize accrediting bodies on the basis of standards related to the effectiveness of the policies and practices of each accrediting body in assessing and encouraging improvement of and in the quality of postsecondary educational institutions and/or programs.
3. Provide national leadership for postsecondary accreditation and the enhancement of educational quality by:
    a) Cultivating an understanding of the role, nature, and significance of accreditation;
    b) Serving as an official voice for accreditation at national and state levels;
    c) Initiating conferences and activities for the purposes of improving understanding of accreditation and the processes of assessment; and
    d) Promoting active collaboration and/or interaction among educational leaders, institutions/programs, and federal and state agencies.

4. Provide services by:
    a) Assisting institutions, programs, and accrediting bodies to improve the implementation of accrediting policies and procedures;
    b) Offering professional development programming to the membership and interested parties;
    c) Providing a forum and vehicle for discussion and development of national accreditation policies;
    d) Facilitating coordination among accrediting associations;
    e) Encouraging, sponsoring, conducting and publishing research related to the understanding and improvement of accreditation;
    f) Monitoring federal and state activities related to accreditation and informing the accrediting community; and
    g) Publishing annual lists of recognized accrediting bodies, the institutions and programs which they accredit, and other information on accreditation.

ARTICLE III
Accreditation

Except for members assigned by the Board to the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation, each member of the Council shall have the responsibility as recognized by the Board for the evaluation and accreditation of postsecondary institutions or programs. This determination shall be in the form of a statement of scope for each member's accrediting activities. The accreditation of a postsecondary institution or program by one member of the Council shall be recognized by all other members provided, however, that such recognition shall not in any manner infringe upon the independence of each institution to choose or admit students in accordance with its own policies. The Council shall serve in a recognizing, reviewing, and coordinating capacity but shall not be an accrediting association for individual institutions or educational programs.

ARTICLE IV
Membership and Officers

Sec. 4:01. Membership.

The Council membership shall consist of the accrediting associations recognized by the Council as of July 1, 1987 and organizations representing the national postsecondary education community. New members shall be admitted to the Council upon having met the policies and procedures established by the Board for admitting new members.

The Board shall establish policies and procedures governing membership in the Council. Except for members assigned by the Board to the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation, membership in the Council shall be synonymous with recognition by the Board of the member's accrediting activities, which shall be subject to periodic review, and which may be obtained or terminated only by a fifty-one percent (51%) vote of the total membership of the Board.

Sec. 4:02. Officers.

Officers of the Council shall be the Officers of the Board as hereinafter provided.

ARTICLE V
The Board

Sec. 5:01. General Powers.

The activities of the Council shall be managed by its Board. All the corporate powers, except as otherwise provided for in the Articles of Incorporation and these bylaws, shall be and are hereby vested in and shall be exercised by the Board as provided in the Articles of Incorporation of the Council.

Sec. 5:02. Policy.

The Board shall establish, in consultation with the Assemblies, formal procedures for developing, adopting, and implementing policy.

Sec. 5:03. Number and Qualifications.

The Board shall consist of nineteen members who, with the exception of ex-officio and public members, shall hold positions of responsibility in accredited institutions or programs of postsecondary education. In electing persons to the Board, the three Assemblies, as hereinafter provided, should elect persons who may normally be expected to complete their full three-year terms.

The composition of the Board membership shall be as follows:

1. Three elected by the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies,	3
2. Three elected by the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation,	3
3. Three elected by the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies,	3
4. Three chief executive officers of accredited institutions elected by the Board,	3
5. Three public representatives elected by the Board from outside the academic accrediting community, and	3
6. Four ex-officio members:	4
a) The Chairperson of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies,	
b) The Chairperson of the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation,	
c) The Chairperson of the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies,	
d) The President of the Council.	
Total Composition of the Board:	19

At any time, the Board membership shall consist of those members then holding appointments as provided above.

Staff persons of the accrediting bodies which are members of the Council may attend meetings, serve as consultants or observers, and participate in discussions when recognized by the Chairperson. Executives and/or representatives from other accrediting or educational constituencies, e.g., members of the Council of Regional School Accrediting Commissions or the State Higher Education Executive Officers organization, also may be invited to Board meetings as observers in accordance with the public meeting policy adopted by the Board.

Sec. 5:04. Terms of Office.

The terms of office of Board members shall be as follows:

1. The terms of office of elected Board members shall normally be three years. To assure that approximately one-third of the Board shall be elected each year, however, the Board shall make provisions for deciding which members with terms beginning July 1, 1982 shall serve for terms of less than three years. *Ex-officio* Board members shall serve concurrently with the terms of their respective offices.
2. No elected Board member shall serve more than two full three-year terms except that the Chairperson-Elect, as hereinafter provided, shall be eligible to serve for such additional years as shall be necessary to complete his scheduled term or terms as an officer.

3. Except for the President, each person selected for membership on the Board shall be given written notice of appointment by the President of the Council. The President shall be given notice by contract when appointed.
4. A Board member shall become ineligible to serve if the member changes professional positions and assumes professional duties outside the community of interests which established the eligibility for his/her original membership on the Board.
5. Unexpired terms of Board members shall be filled in the same manner in which the original selection was made. Such new members shall assume office immediately and shall serve for the remainder of the respective terms. Such elected members shall subsequently be eligible to serve two full three-year terms. Such *ex-officio* members shall serve concurrently with the terms of their respective offices.
6. All new members of the Board serving regular terms shall assume office on July 1 following their election.
7. A Board member who completes two full three-year terms shall be eligible for reelection after the expiration of three years.

Sec. 5:05. Officers of the Board, Terms, and Duties.

Officers of the Board shall be a Chairperson, a Chairperson-Elect in election years, a Past Chairperson in alternate years, a Treasurer, a Secretary, and the Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition. An election year shall be the fiscal year following an election of officers. The Chairperson-Elect, the Treasurer, and the Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition shall be elected at an annual meeting from among members of the Board and by members of the Board. The Chairperson-Elect and Past Chairperson shall serve for alternate terms of one year. The Chairperson, the Treasurer, and the Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition shall serve for terms of two years. The Treasurer and the Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition shall be eligible for reelection for one additional term. The Chairperson Elect, the Treasurer, and the Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition and shall take office on July 1 following their election. The Secretary shall be the President of the Council. As previously noted, the officers of the Board shall be deemed to be officers of the Council and as hereinafter provided shall be members and officers of the Executive Committee. A vacancy in an office may be filled by the Board for the unexpired portion of the term.

The duties of the Officers shall be as follows:

1. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board and of the Executive Committee and shall perform all duties which are usually attendant upon this office, and other duties as may be prescribed by the Board.
2. Upon completion of his/her term, the Chairperson shall become Past Chairperson.
3. The Chairperson-Elect, in the absence of the Chairperson, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson and when so acting shall exercise the powers of the Chairperson as prescribed in these bylaws. The Chairperson-Elect shall also perform other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson.
4. Upon completion of his/her term, the Chairperson-Elect shall become Chairperson.
5. The Past Chairperson, in the absence of the Chairperson, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson and when so acting shall exercise the powers of the Chairperson as prescribed in these bylaws. The past Chairperson shall also perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson.
6. The Treasurer shall perform all duties which are usually attendant upon this office or as may be delegated or assigned by the Chairperson.
7. The Secretary shall perform all duties which are usually attendant upon this office or as may be delegated or assigned by the Chairperson. In the absence or disability of the Secretary, the Chairperson, Chairperson-Elect, Past Chairperson, or Treasurer may sign all papers normally requiring the signature of the Secretary.
8. The Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition shall represent the interests of the Committee on Recognition and shall perform all duties as may be delegated or assigned by the Chairperson.

Sec. 5:06. Meetings.

There shall be regular meetings and special meetings of the Board, as follows:

1. Regular Meetings. The Board shall have a fall meeting and a spring meeting each year and such other meetings as may be necessary at the time and place designated by the Board. The spring meeting of the Board shall be in conjunction with the meeting of the Combined Assembly and shall be designated the annual meeting of the Council. Written notice shall be given at least ten (10) days prior to each meeting.
2. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board may be called by the Chairperson (or President acting as his/her agent) or at the request of any five (5) elected members of the Board. The President shall fix the time and place for special meetings. Written notice shall be given at least ten (10) days prior to each special meeting.

Sec. 5:07. Quorum and Manner of Acting.

Fifty-one percent (51%) of the elected Board membership shall constitute a quorum for purposes of carrying on the work of the Board. Except as may be otherwise provided in these bylaws, actions shall be taken on affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of the Board present at any regular or special meeting. Proposals for action may be placed before the Board by any member of the Board. Routine matters will be acted upon at the same meeting where they are presented. Major substantive proposals ordinarily will not be acted upon at the meeting at which they are first introduced unless they have been circulated to all Board members at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting, or unless action to consider such proposals is approved by two-thirds of the elected members present and voting. Except for the President of the Council, *ex-officio* members shall vote on all matters before the Board.

Sec. 5:08. Minutes.

The draft minutes of the meetings of the Board shall be sent to each member thereof, to each member of the Council, and to such other agencies or individuals as the Board may designate. The draft minutes of meetings of the Board, or of any committee thereof, shall not become the official records of the Council until approved by the Board or committee present at the meeting for which the minutes are prepared.

Sec. 5:09. Compensation.

Except for the President, Board members shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as Board members. The Board shall fix by contract the compensation and other emoluments of the President.

ARTICLE VI
Executive Committee

Sec. 6:01. Membership, Election, and Terms of Office.

There shall be an Executive Committee of the Board composed of **six** members to include the Chairperson of the Board, Chairperson-Elect in election years, Past Chairperson in alternate years, Treasurer, Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition, and an elected Member At-Large, each as voting members, and the Secretary as a non-voting member. The Chairperson, Chairperson-Elect, Past Chairperson, and Treasurer shall serve concurrently with the terms of their respective offices. The Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition and the Member At-Large shall be elected in the same year for two year terms from among the members of the Board. The Secretary shall be the President of the Council.

Sec. 6:02. General Powers and Duties.

The Executive Committee shall have and may exercise all the powers of the Board during the interim period between meetings of the Board, except that the Executive Committee shall not have the power to amend these bylaws or to determine membership or discontinuance of membership in the Council. The Committee may specifically reserve certain powers to itself or specifically assign them to other committees or officers.

The Executive Committee shall prepare and approve the agenda for each meeting of the Board and shall make recommendations to the Board on the annual budget, financing plan, dues, assessments and outside funding. The Committee shall also oversee the Council's investments, review the audit, and monitor and review staff organization and compensation.

Sec. 6:03. Meetings.

The Executive Committee shall meet at least semiannually and at such other times as may become necessary. Meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the Chairperson, or in the Chairperson's absence or disability, by the Chairperson-Elect or Past Chairperson. Written notice shall be given at least five (5) days prior to each meeting to each member of the Executive Committee at addresses shown on the records of the Council, except that written notice may be waived provided an emergency exists and each Executive Committee member is otherwise notified. A majority of the voting membership of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 6:04. Reporting.

The Executive Committee shall report to the Board at each of the Board's regular or special meetings presenting a summary of the Committee's activities since the last previous meeting of the Board.

Sec. 6:05. Compensation.

Except for the President, members of the Executive Committee shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as committee members. The Board shall fix by contract the compensation and other emoluments of the President.

ARTICLE VII
Committee on Recognition

Sec. 7:01. Membership, Appointment, and Terms of Office.

There shall be a Committee on Recognition composed of nine members. The Chairperson shall be a member of the Board and shall be elected by the Board. The remaining members shall be appointed by the Board from outside the membership of the Board. Each of the following groups shall be represented by two members of the Committee:

1. The Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies,
2. The Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation,
3. The Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies, and
4. The Public.

The Chairperson and other members of the Committee shall serve for two years and shall be eligible for appointment to one additional term. They shall take office on July 1 following their appointment.

Sec. 7:02. Duties.

Under policies and criteria established by the Board, the Committee on Recognition shall review applications of organizations proposing to engage in accreditation of postsecondary institutions or educational programs, examine relevant information, conduct hearings, and consult and inform persons about such applications. The Committee shall also evaluate the current performance of recognized accrediting bodies and may offer recommendations concerning the continuance of the recognition. The Committee shall advise the Board on matters of criteria and procedure in connection with the recognition process. After conducting its review of an organization, the Committee shall report its findings and recommendations to the Board.

The Committee shall also recommend changes in the Council's recognition provisions and procedures, recommend fees for the recognition process, approve review schedules, appoint ad hoc review panels and reader/consultants and make recommendations concerning interagency cooperation in accreditation.

Sec. 7:03. Meetings.

The Committee on Recognition shall meet as may become necessary. Meetings of the Committee shall be called by the Chairperson. A majority of the membership of the Committee shall constitute a quorum.

Sec. 7:04. Reporting.

The Committee on Recognition shall report to the Board at each of the Board's annual meetings, and at other regular or special Board meetings as may become necessary.

Sec. 7:05. Compensation.

Members of the Committee on Recognition shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as committee members.

ARTICLE VIII
Committee on State Relations

Sec. 8:01. Membership, Appointments, and Terms of Office.

There shall be a Committee on State Relations composed of at least five members appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. Members of the Committee shall serve staggered two-year terms and shall be eligible for reappointment to one additional term. They shall take office on July 1 following their appointment.

Sec. 8:02. Duties.

The Committee on State Relations shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Board, and in this role it may recommend items for the agenda of the Board or the Executive Committee. The Committee shall be responsible for helping to formulate policies of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation as it relates to states and to state agencies. It shall serve when and if appropriate as the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation constituency of a joint Council on Postsecondary Accreditation/State Higher Education Executive Officers Liaison Committee to address common interests of both the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the State Higher Education Executive Officers including, but not limited to, issues related to quality improvement and enhancement of postsecondary education.

Sec. 8:03. Meetings.

The Committee on State Relations shall meet at least annually either with the State Higher Education Executive Officers constituency of the Liaison Committee and/or separately as may become necessary.

Sec. 8:04. Reporting.

The Committee on State Relations shall report to the Board at each of the Board's annual meetings and at other regular or special Board meetings as may become necessary.

Sec. 8:05. Compensation.

Except for the President, Committee members shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as Committee members.

ARTICLE IX
Committee on Professional Development

Sec. 9:01. Membership, Appointment, and Terms of Office.

There shall be a six member Professional Development Committee composed of the Vice Chairpersons of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies and the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies or their designees, two representatives of the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies, one of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies, and one of the Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. The Chairperson shall rotate annually between the Vice Chairpersons or their designees of the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies and the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies. Members of the Committee shall serve for two years and shall be eligible for reappointment for one additional term. Members shall take office on July 1 following their appointment.

Sec. 9:02. Duties.

The Professional Development Committee shall be responsible for the general planning of those activities which will enhance the development of staff of accrediting bodies. The Committee shall advise the Board on matters of professional development and shall be responsible for specific duties assigned by the Board. The Committee shall determine the schedule of Professional Development programs.

Sec. 9:03. Meetings.

The Professional Development Committee shall meet at least semiannually and at such other times as may become necessary.

Sec. 9:04. Reporting.

The Professional Development Committee shall report to the Board at each annual meeting and at other regular or special Board meetings as may become necessary.

Sec. 9:05. Compensation.

Members of the Professional Development Committee shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as Committee members.

ARTICLE X
Nominating Committee

Sec. 10.01. Membership, Appointment, and Terms of Office.

There shall be a Nominating Committee composed of at least three members, appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be a member of the Board; other members may be selected from outside Board membership. The Chairperson and other members of the Nominating Committee shall serve for one year and shall be eligible for reappointment for one additional term. Members shall take office on July 1 following their appointment.

Sec. 10.02. Duties.

The Nominating Committee shall receive and review nominations and place before the Board for election persons qualified for the following positions:

Board members from among chief executive officers of accredited institutions;
Board members to represent the public;
Chairperson-elect of the Board;
Treasurer of the Board;
Member At-large of the Executive Committee;
Members of the Committee on Recognition; and
Chairperson of the Committee on Recognition.

Sec. 10.03. Meetings.

The Nominating Committee shall meet at least annually and at other times as may be necessary.

Sec. 10.04. Reporting.

The Nominating Committee shall report to the Board annually at the annual meeting or at any other meeting during which elections are to be held.

Sec. 10.05. Compensation.

Members of the Nominating Committee shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as Committee members.

ARTICLE XI
Special Assemblies

Sec 11:01. Membership.

There shall be three special assemblies as an integral part of the Council as follows:

1. Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies,
2. Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation,
3. Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies.

Each postsecondary accrediting body recognized by the Council shall be assigned by the Board to either the Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies or the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies, but not both. If an accrediting body believes it has been improperly classified, or if an assembly believes that an accrediting body's membership is inappropriate, the Board shall reconsider the classification on appeal and make a final determination.

The Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation shall develop procedures and conditions for membership, subject to approval by the Board. Members of this Assembly shall be major national postsecondary institutional organizations that do not conduct accreditation and shall include the participation of governing boards through the membership of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. Each organization shall designate two members to serve on the Assembly. Members may be added or removed in accordance with this Assembly's rules or the provisions of these bylaws or by the Board.

Failure to pay annual membership dues as assessed by the Council shall constitute cause for removal from membership in the Council.

Sec. 11:02. General Powers.

Each Assembly shall have the power to:

1. Elect members to the Board as herein provided,
2. Place matters on the agenda of the Board,
3. Report to the Board,
4. Prepare its own agenda,
5. Elect its own officers as herein provided,
6. Delegate to its officers the power to act on its behalf between Assembly meetings,
7. Meet as an assembly or as subgroups of the Assemblies as may become necessary, in addition to the regular annual meeting of the Assemblies, as herein provided,
8. Nominate at least two representatives to the Committee on Recognition,
9. Receive reports from its chairperson on its activities or those of any subgroup,
10. Request necessary staff assistance from the Council,
11. Adopt rules of order to govern its meetings; however, such rules shall not be inconsistent with any provision of the Bylaws or Articles of Incorporation of the Council or with the laws of the District of Columbia.

Notwithstanding the above, no Assembly shall act on behalf of the Council or engage in any business or other activity obligating the Council or otherwise abridging any rights, powers or privileges of the Council.

Sec. 11:03. Officers of Assemblies, Terms and Duties.

Officers of each Special Assembly shall be a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, and a Secretary, each of whom shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Assembly. Officers shall be representatives of the respective assembly members and shall take office on July 1 following their election. Officers shall serve for three years. Officers may be removed and vacancies filled as each Assembly shall determine.

The duties of the officers shall be as follows:

1. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the respective Assembly and shall perform all duties which are usually attendant upon this office.
2. The Vice Chairperson, in the absence of the Chairperson, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson and when so acting shall exercise the powers of the Chairperson. The Vice Chairperson shall perform other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson.
3. The Secretary shall perform all duties which are usually attendant upon this office or as may be delegated or assigned by the Chairperson.
4. No automatic order of succession of office is intended by these titles or descriptions of duties.
5. The Chairperson of each Assembly shall serve as an *ex-officio* member of the Board of the Council.
6. The Board shall make provisions for deciding which officers of the Assemblies shall be assigned terms of less than three years to insure that one-third of the officers shall be elected each year.

Sec. 11:04. Meetings

There shall be regular meetings, special meetings, subgroup meetings, and officers' meetings of the assemblies as follows:

1. Regular Meetings. There shall be a spring meeting of each Assembly at which they shall meet separately as Assemblies and concurrently as the Combined Assembly. The spring meeting shall be the annual meeting and shall be held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Board. The Chairperson of the Combined Assembly shall be the Chairperson of the Assembly who is serving the last year of his/her term. The Presidents Policy Assembly on Accreditation may schedule one additional meeting on call. The Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies and the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies may meet in conjunction with the fall Board meeting on call.
2. Special Meetings. Special meetings of each Assembly may be called by the respective Chairperson or at the written request of a majority of the members of the respective Assembly. The Chairperson shall fix the time and place for special meetings. Written notice shall be given to members at least ten (10) days prior to each special meeting.
3. Subgroup Meetings. Members of each Assembly may meet as a subgroup at the time of the regular Assembly meetings, at the fall meeting of the Board, or at such other times and places as they may decide in cooperation with COPA staff. Each such meeting of a subgroup shall designate a chairperson pro-tem who shall not be an Assembly officer.

   Subsequent to each such meeting the chairperson pro-tem shall report to the Chairperson and to the Secretary of the respective Assembly on the activities of the subgroup meeting.
4. Officers' Meetings. The Officers of the Assemblies shall meet with the Officers of the Board prior to and in conjunction with the fall and spring meetings of the Board.
5. A majority of the membership of each Assembly shall constitute a quorum for general and special meetings of the respective Assembly or meetings of the Combined Assembly.

Sec. 11:05. Reporting.

Each Assembly shall report to the Board at each of the Board's annual meetings and at other regular or special Board meetings as may become necessary.

Each Chairperson shall report to the respective Assembly at each of the Assembly's annual meetings and at other regular or special Assembly meetings as may become necessary.

Sec. 11:06. Compensation.

Officers of each Assembly shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as assembly officers.

ARTICLE XII

Administration

Sec. 12:01. The President.

The Board shall appoint a President to serve at its pleasure as the chief executive staff officer of the Council, and shall fix by contract the duties, responsibilities, and emoluments of the position.

The President shall provide leadership in carrying on the work of the Council, shall represent and express the views of the Council when and where appropriate, and shall serve as the custodian of the corporate records. The President shall see that all notices are duly given in accordance with these Bylaws or as required by law; arrange for meetings, printing, mailing, and the like; serve as Secretary of the Board, as an *ex-officio* member of the Board, and as an *ex-officio* member of all committees of the Council; keep the official minutes of all meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee, and all special committees; and coordinate Council studies and research projects. The President shall receive and collect dues and other obligations to the Council, pay its debts, manage its assets, and otherwise perform the functions of business manager.

In addition, the President shall perform other duties as may be assigned by the Board or the Executive Committee in accordance with the corporate purposes of the Council.

Sec. 12:02. Staff.

The President shall appoint professional and support personnel as needed in consultation with and on terms approved by the Executive Committee.

Sec. 12:03. Annual Report.

The President shall make each year at the annual meeting a written report on the affairs of the Council. Such report shall be made to the Board, which may authorize its further distribution.

ARTICLE XIII

Finances

Sec. 13:01. Dues.

The Board shall be responsible for the finances of the Council, shall adopt a financing plan fixing the dues or assessments to be levied for its support, and shall be empowered to seek and accept funds from various sources if and when deemed desirable for carrying on the purposes of the Council.

Sec. 13:02. Budget.

The Board shall approve an annual budget for the operation of the Council. It shall also approve emergency appropriations and/or assessments. The Budget of the Council shall be adequate to support its basic services; however, part of the budget may be met by subscriber fees for information services and by gifts and grants for research and special projects.

Sec. 13:03. Audit.

The finances of the Council shall be audited each year by a certified public accountant or firm and such auditor or firm shall submit a written report immediately following the end of each fiscal year. Copies of the written report shall be provided to the officers and shall be available to each member of the Board. Summaries of the audit report shall be circulated to each member of the Board and to each member of the Council. The fiscal year for the Council shall begin on July 1 of each year and shall end on June 30 of the succeeding year.

ARTICLE XIV

Other Committees

The Board, in addition to the Executive Committee, the Committee on Recognition, the Committee on State Relations, the Committee on Professional Development, and the Nominating Committee, may establish such other committees and assign their duties as it deems necessary to carry out the functions of the Board or the Council. Members of committees need not be members of the Board. Members of committees shall receive no compensation for their services but shall be reimbursed for travel and other necessary expenses incurred in fulfilling their duties as committee members. Committees shall include panels, task forces, ad hoc groups, etc. as the Board may designate.

ARTICLE XV
Power of Attorney

The Chairperson, Chairperson-Elect or Past Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary shall have authority as attorney in fact to execute and acknowledge on behalf of the corporation, legal documents or other instruments in connection with the operations of the corporation as approved generally and specifically by the Executive Committee or the Board.

ARTICLE XVI
Bonding

The Treasurer, Secretary, and other officers and employees as required by the Board shall be bonded at the expense of the Council in the amounts determined by the Board.

ARTICLE XVII
Removal

Sec. 17:01. Executive Officers.

Executive officers or agents appointed or elected by the Board may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the total elected membership of the Board at any regular meeting or special meeting called for that purpose.

Sec. 17:02. The Board Members.

A Board member absent without cause from two consecutive meetings of the Board may be removed by the Board. A new member shall then be requested from the assembly originally making the appointment or a new member shall then be elected by the Board.

ARTICLE XVIII
Administration of Property

Sec. 18:01. General Powers.

The Board, representing the corporation, shall have the power to sue and be sued, to purchase, take, receive, lease, take by gift, devise or bequest, or otherwise acquire, own, hold, improve, use and otherwise deal in and with real or personal property, or any interest therein, and otherwise dispose of all or any part of its property and assets; to lend money to and otherwise assist its employees other than its officers and directors; to make contracts and incur liabilities, borrow money at such rates of interest as the corporation may determine, issue its notes, bonds, and other obligations, and secure its obligations by mortgage or pledge of all or any of its property, franchises and income; to conduct its affairs, carry on its operations, hold property, and have offices and exercise the powers granted by this charter in any part of the world; to elect or appoint officers and agents of the corporation, and define their duties and fix their compensation; to make and alter bylaws, not inconsistent with its Articles of Incorporation or with the laws of the District of Columbia, for the administration and regulation of the affairs of the Corporation. Notwithstanding the above, the Council shall not engage in any business or other activity which is not in the furtherance of and exclusively for its educational, scientific, research, mutual improvement, and professional purposes, and which do not comply fully with the Sherman Act, the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act.

Sec. 18:02. Funds.

The funds of the corporation shall be deposited in such depositories as may be approved by the Board or the Executive Committee, but such depositing authority may be delegated by them to the President.

Sec. 18:03. Litigation.

The corporation shall defend against suit or legal proceedings, pay the expenses and indemnify against judgment or loss of any Board member, officer, agent or employee or former Board member, officer, agent or employee of the corporation arising out of any connection with or activities on behalf of the corporation provided that person is not guilty of bad faith. This provision shall not be deemed to be exclusive of any other rights to which such person may be entitled under any bylaw, agreement, vote of the Board, Executive Committee, or members, otherwise.

ARTICLE XIX
Amendments

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed by any member of the Board or by any member of the Council. Amendments shall be submitted to the Board at least thirty (30) days prior to consideration thereof by the Board. Amendments shall be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Board, and shall become effective on the date as it shall determine.

ARTICLE XX
Procedure

Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern all meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee and parliamentary procedures of the Council insofar as they are not inconsistent with applicable statutes, the Articles of Incorporation and these bylaws, unless other specific procedure is provided by the Board.

ARTICLE XXI
Dissolution

The Council may be dissolved, or merged with another similar corporation carrying on substantially the same activities, upon approval of a plan of dissolution adopted by a two-thirds vote of the total membership of the Board. Such a plan of dissolutioon shall provide for the complete payment and discharge of all corporate obligations before disposition of the net corporate assets, which may then be distributed equally among such constituent members of this corporation or their successors as are in existence, actively engaged, and qualify as tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

Procedure to Be Followed in the Development of COPA Policy Statements

One of the major purposes of COPA, as stated in the Bylaws (Article II, Item 3b) is to serve "as an official voice for accreditation at national and state levels." In carrying out this purpose, it is necessary that COPA follow a procedure that provides an opportunity for comment from the many constituent groups of COPA.

Under most circumstances, COPA will pursue the following procedure in the development of policy statements intended to represent the postsecondary accreditation community, as well as internal documents that would significantly affect all or most accrediting bodies:

1. The Executive Committee or the Board authorizes the establishment of a task force.
2. The Chairman appoints the task force, conferring with others as appropriate in the development of a written charge and the selection of members. This action will be reported to the Executive Committee, the Board, and in the *President's Bulletin*.
3. The task force develops a draft document.
4. The draft statement is circulated for comment, to members of the Board, all COPA constituents, and others as appropriate.
5. The task force revises the statement in response to comments received.
6. Steps (4) and (5) are repeated, if necessary.
7. Once the task force has what it believes to be a final draft, that document is submitted to the Executive Committee.
8. After consideration, the Executive Committee may refer the statement back to the task force for further work or present the statement to the Board.
9. The Board may refer the statement back to the task force, reject it, or approve it (as is or modified) as a statement of COPA policy.
10. Once approved by the Board, the statement is issued in an appropriate form. It will be included in a compilation of official policy statements maintained by COPA, and copies will be distributed to all COPA constituents.

Policy on Public Meetings of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA) is a private, nongovernmental organization incorporated in the District of Columbia. As such, it may conduct its corporate business in a manner conducive to the furtherance of its stated objectives, including operating in executive sessions. However, because educational accreditation is of great interest to a large number of persons, and the Council's stated objectives include service to the public, the policy of the Council concerning meetings of its Board and official committees shall be as follows:

Board: Meetings of the COPA Board ordinarily shall be open to the general public. When sensitive matters such as personnel or finances, about COPA itself or any of its recognized or applicant accrediting bodies, are being discussed, the meeting may move into executive session. Insofar as possible, such contemplated closed sessions will be indicated on the printed agenda to be circulated prior to any regular or special meeting of the Board. When, in the opinion of the Chair, discussions are tending toward sensitive areas, even if not pre-indicated for executive discussion, the Chair may call for a closed session, and if the call is supported by a simple plurality of those present, the move to recess and reconvene in executive session shall be supported. All votes taken by the Board on this or any other matter shall be in open session.

Committees and Task Forces: Meetings of Board committees and task forces—standing or ad hoc—shall be open to the Board members. Official representatives of COPA constituent groups who may wish to attend as observers may request that privilege.

Recognition Reviews: The Committee on Recognition reviews applications of organizations accrediting postsecondary institutions or programs. Hearing sessions at which agency applications for recognition and third party comments are presented shall be open to the public. The Chairman shall have the normal parliamentary prerogatives in conducting the hearings, recognizing parties, receiving comments, etc. However, to avoid prejudice to the agency seeking recognition, the following practices of fairness and due process shall be observed. Third parties who wish to appear and make oral comments at the hearings must apply in writing by a published deadline. The request is to include a statement of how the accrediting activities of the applicant body are of direct concern to the commentator. At the hearings, the agenda will include only third parties whose requests have been approved. All written comments must be submitted by the same deadline, and, in particular, no written comments will be accepted for the record from the third parties at the hearing. All written comments will be shared with the respective applicant agency. This schedule of notice may be waived totally or in part by consent of the applicant agency.

At the hearings all official parts of the review record shall be reserved to the Board, COPA staff and consultants, and the respective applicant agencies, and shall not be available to the public. However, the full application submitted by the agency and materials submitted by third parties may be reviewed by request at the COPA offices.

The Committee on Recognition, after conducting its review of an application, will convene in executive session to discuss its findings and develop its recommendations to the Board. The submission of recommendations by the Committee on Recognition to the Board and the Board's subsequent deliberations shall be considered normal agenda activities of the Board and shall be open to the public as provided above.

General Procedures: Observers at any open meeting will be seated as space permits, on a first come basis. They will be allowed to participate in discussions only when called upon by the Chair, or subsequent to a written request submitted prior to the meeting and ruled on by the Chair.

Individuals who wish to place items on the official Board agenda or to appear before the Board must submit their requests in writing to the President of the Council in time for presentation of the request to the Executive Committee which approves the agenda for the Board. The Executive Committee meets not less than one month before each Board meeting.

4/13/78
Revised 11/23/81

Assembly Rules of Order

Rules Governing The Order of Meetings Of The Assembly Of Institutional Accrediting Bodies

Assembly meetings shall be open to professional observers from the accrediting community, as determined by the chairman. Each Assembly accrediting body shall carry a formal executive session among the items of business which the chairman may convene in accordance with the action of the Assembly.

Rules Governing The Order Of Meetings Of The Assembly Of Specialized Accrediting Bodies

The following rules shall govern the conduct of all meetings of the Assembly of Specialized Accrediting Bodies.

1. Meetings and Notice

1.1. General Meetings of Members
A general meeting of the members shall be held each year for the election of officers and for consideration of such other pertinent business as may come before the assembly.

1.2. Special Meetings of Members
Special meetings of the members may be called by the chairman, the secretary, the board of directors, or by members having at least one-half of the votes entitled to be cast at such meetings.

1.3. Notice of Meetings
Written or printed notice stating the place, day, and hour of the meeting and, in the case of a special meeting, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is being called, shall be delivered not less than twenty nor more than one hundred days before the date of the meeting, either personally or by mail, by or at the direction of the chairman, or the secretary, or the officers or persons calling the meeting, to each member entitled to vote at such meeting. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail addressed to the member at his or her address as it appears on the records of the assembly, with postage thereon prepaid.

2. Conduct of Meetings

2.1. Time and Place of Meeting
Meetings of members may be held at such time and at such place within or without the District of Columbia as are provided in the notice of the meeting.

2.2. Quorum

2.2.1. Members having a majority of the votes entitled to be cast represented in person or by proxy shall constitute a quorum.

2.2.2. Rules Governing the Conduct of Meetings
The rules contained in *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern the assembly in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation or the special rules of order of this assembly.

2.3 Agenda and Order of Business
The officers of the assembly shall prepare the agenda for all meetings of the assembly. The order of business at meetings of the assembly shall be as follows: (1) call to order by presiding officer; (2) establishment of quorum; (3) reading and correction of minutes of previous meeting; (4) reports of officers and committees; (5) old business; (6) elections (if any); (7) new business, and (8) adjournment.

2.4 Open Session
All business of the assembly shall be conducted in open session except when, by a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by those present or represented by proxy, the members choose to convene in executive or closed session. Members of the public may observe the business transacted by the assembly in open sessions and may address the assembly on any pertinent business considered or capable of being considered during such sessions.

3. **Voting**

3.1 Right to Vote

Each member of the assembly shall be entitled to one vote.

3.2. Majority Rule

The affirmative vote of a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the members present or represented by proxy at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be necessary for the adoption of any matter voted upon by the members.

3.3 Voting Methods

A member may vote in person or, in the case of the election of officers, may vote by proxy executed in writing by the member of his duly authorized attorney-in-fact. No proxy shall be valid after eleven months from the date of its execution. Voting on all matters, including the election of officers, may be conducted by mail.

4. **Nominations**

4.1 Right to Nominate

Any member of the assembly may make a nomination.

4.2 Nomination Committee

The chairman of the assembly shall appoint a nomination committee for the election of officers of the assembly. The nomination committee shall be comprised of four members appointed by the chairman of the assembly, one of whom shall serve as chairman of the committee.

4.3 Procedure for Nomination

Prior to the general meeting of the assembly, written nominations for each of the officers of the assembly shall be solicited from the members of the assembly. The nomination committee shall submit its slate of nominees to the membership at least thirty days prior to the general meeting. After the committee has made its report, nominations shall be opened for additional names to be offered from the floor.

5. **Elections**

Officers shall be elected by a majority of the votes entitled to be cast by the members present or represented by proxy at a general meeting of the assembly.

6. **Officers and Board Members**

6.1 Terms and Duties of Officers

The duties and terms of office of each of the officers of the assembly shall be those prescribed in section 9:03 of the COPA bylaws.

6.2 Terms and Duties of Board Members

The assembly shall appoint, for such terms of office as are set forth in section 5:03 of the COPA bylaws, as many members of the COPA board with such qualifications as are required by section 5:04 of the COPA bylaws.

6.3 Vacancies of Office

If by reason of death, resignation, or otherwise, the membership of an officer or board member is terminated, the chairman of the assembly shall, with the advice of the other officer or officers, appoint a member to fill the vacancy until a successor is elected at the next general meeting of the members.

6.4 Removal from Office

Any appointed board member or elected officer who fails to attend two consecutive meetings of the board or the assembly respectively shall, unless excused by a majority of the members of the assembly, be removed from office. The vacancy thus created shall be filled in the manner provided in section 6.3., above.

7. **Membership**

Membership in the assembly shall be limited to those who meet the requirements set forth in section 8:01 of the COPA bylaws.

8. Motions, Position Papers and Resolutions

8.1 Motions

Every member of the assembly has a right to present a motion.

8.2 Position Papers and Resolutions

8.2.1. Position Papers and Resolutions Originated by the Officers for Presentation to the Membership

The Officers shall develop a schedule for the review of such position papers and resolutions based on the exigencies of each situation. Circulation of drafts prior to assembly meetings is preferable when possible.

8.2.2. Position Papers and Resolutions Originating Outside the Officers for Presentation to the Membership

Members wishing to submit position papers and resolutions for consideration during an assembly meeting may do so by submitting these in writing to the officers at any time prior to an assembly meeting. The officers will study the resolution or position paper in consultation with the member and develop a recommendation to accompany the resolution or position paper to be placed before the membership at its next meeting. Circulation of drafts prior to assembly meetings is preferable when possible.

8.2.3. Resolutions Introduced on the Floor of the Assembly

Resolutions introduced on the floor of the assembly must be passed by a two-thirds majority of those eligible to vote when a quorum is present as outlined in section 2.2., above.

Classification of Accrediting Bodies

A concept framework for clear differentiation of institutional and specialized accreditation must focus on fundamental characteristics and functions of types of accrediting bodies. The following five characteristics appear to be basic:

Institutional	**Specialized**
1. The policies and procedures of the accrediting body place primary focus on the quality of total institutions.	1. The policies and procedures of the accrediting body place primary focus on the quality of professional, occupational or disciplinary preparation.
2. The predominant activity of the accrediting body is with free-standing multi-disciplinary institutions.	2. The predominant activity of the accrediting body is with discipline, occupation, or profession-oriented programs, institutions, or units within institutions.
3. The governance of the accrediting body is by representatives of accredited institutions.	3. The governance of the accrediting body is by representatives of accredited programs, institutions or units within institutions, and practitioners or members of the appropriate occupation or profession.
4. The accrediting body is funded by institutional dues and fees.	4. The accrediting body may be funded by institutions or programs, appropriate professional organizations, or a combination of these.
5. The accrediting body's accreditation is not contingent upon accreditation by another accrediting body.	5. Accreditation by the accrediting body of schools or programs in complex institutions is usually dependent upon prior institutional accreditation.

The respective accrediting bodies are thus defined as follows:

1. **An institutional accrediting body** accredits an institution as a whole and therefore includes all areas, activities, and programs of the institution. It primarily accredits free-standing, multi-disciplinary institutions; is governed by representatives of the institutions it accredits; is funded by its member institutions; and in its evaluation includes the total institutional structure. Moreover, the criteria of eligibility provide that academic degree programs, however specialized, must rest upon a base of liberal or general studies required of all students. Accreditation of the institution as a whole does not imply specialized accreditation of a part or program of the institution.

2. **A specialized accrediting body** accredits professional, occupational or disciplinary programs, institutions, or units within institutions; is governed by members of the related occupation or profession; is funded by institutions and/or appropriate professional organizations; usually requires prior institutional accreditation; and is concerned with other institutional characteristics to the extent that they bear on the program in question. The focus of specialized accreditation is on the effectiveness with which the program meets its objectives and those of the institution, and the national accrediting standards for quality education in the field involved. Normally, specialized accreditation reviews the relationship of the program to the larger unit, the adequacy of the organization and resources for program maintenance and development, and evidence of accomplishment of programmatic objectives. Specialized accreditation does not purport to make judgments on the institution as a whole except for single-purpose institutions.

•••

The Committee on Recognition will be responsible for recommending the classification of accrediting bodies by scope, including assignment to an appropriate Assembly of accrediting bodies, in terms of the characteristics or criteria cited above. (Included in the official letter of notification by the Board to an applicant agency, along with the Board's action on recognition, will be the following statement: "This recognition includes membership and participation in the Assembly of _________".)

Classifications and/or reclassification of membership in Assemblies shall be made at the time an agency is reviewed for initial or renewed recognition. "If an agency believes it has been improperly classified, or if an Assembly believes that an agency's membership is inappropriate, the Board shall reconsider the classification on appeal and make a final determination". (COPA Bylaw, Article IX, Sec. 9:01)

Approved by COPA Board
October 8, 1982

Policy on Invested Funds and Use of Earnings on Interest from Investments

It is the intention of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation that its investment funds be placed in an appropriate mix of equities and fixed-income securities adequate to provide the additional income balance necessary. The policy of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation is to secure a high percentage of interest income on funds invested generally to be used to augment its current operating budget.

It shall not be the policy to routinely accumulate such funds to increase the General Fund balance. It shall be the policy of the Council to maintain a General Fund balance equal to not less than 50%, nor more than 100% of the most recently completed fiscal year's operating budget. In order to maintain this policy, staff shall call it to the Executive Committee's attention any time the General Fund balance drops below 60% or exceeds 90% so the Executive Committee can consider whether budget modifications are indicated. The COPA staff and treasurer will periodically review the investment account and the reserve funds balance to determine performance and recommend whether changes in the investment policy by the Executive Committee are indicated.

Policy Statement on Accreditation and Eligibility

Accreditation is a unique American process for assessing educational institutions and programs for their quality and performance, entitling them to the confidence of the education community and the public. Accreditation is extended through nongovernmental voluntary institutional and professional associations or agencies which have responsibility for establishing criteria, authorizing institutional and programmatic self-studies, visiting and evaluating institutions at their request, and accrediting those institutions and programs which meet their criteria.

In 1791, through the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, it was clearly established that the federal government did not have specific powers regarding education. The separation of responsibilities between government and education so basic to our national policy is exemplified by the wording of Section 103 of the Department of Education Act which prohibits "any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction, administration, or personnel of any educational institution...or accrediting agency..." by the federal government.

However, the federal government has provided financial support to students and educational institutions through a wide variety of programs aimed at improving the general welfare. With this financing came a legitimate federal interest in determining which institutions and programs are educationally sound. Because the federal government was restricted in its jurisdiction over education, and because there was an effective nongovernmental process for determining educational quality, working connections were established between accreditation and the determination of eligibility for institutions to apply for federal funds. On the basis of long experience, independent accreditation has served as the best means to provide the federal government with reasonable assurance of acceptable educational quality in institutions and programs.

The connection between eligibility for federal funds and accreditation is highly desirable. Accreditation serves the needs of many agenices, both inside and outside of government, which must judge from among numerous applicants those eligible to share in limited appropriations. Educational quality should be a fundamental element in eligibility for federal funds, and accreditation is the means for judging that quality. Federal legislation and regulations should provide for an appropriate use of nongovernmental accreditation for eligibility purposes while also ensuring strict and continued adherence to the principle of separation.

Accepted by:
Joint COPA Assemblies
St. Louis, Missouri
March 13, 1980

Adopted by:
Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
Atlanta, Georgia
April 8, 1980

Endorsed by:
Interassociation Presidents' Committee on Accreditation
Washington, D.C.
May 9, 1980

Policy Statement on the Role and Value of Accreditation

Accreditation is an activity long accepted in the United States, but generally unknown in most other countries because other countries rely on governmental supervision and control of educational institutions. The record of accomplishment and outstanding success in the education of Americans can be traced in large part to the reluctance of the United States to impose governmental restrictions on institutions of postsecondary education, and to the success of the voluntary American system of accreditation in promoting quality without inhibiting innovation. The high proportion of Americans benefiting from higher education, the reputation of universities in the United States for both fundamental and applied research, and the widespread availability of professional services in the United States all testify to postsecondary education of high quality, and to the success of the accreditation system which the institutions and professions of the United States have devised to promote that quality.

I

Accreditation is a status granted to an educational institution or a program that has been found to meet or exceed stated criteria of educational quality. In the United States accreditation is voluntarily sought by institutions and programs, and is conferred by non-governmental bodies.

Accreditation has two fundamental purposes: to assure the quality of the institution or program, and to assist in the improvement of the institution or program. Accreditation, which applies to institutions or programs, is to be distinguished from certification and licensure which apply to individuals.

The bodies conducting institutional accreditation are national or regional in scope, and comprise the institutions that have achieved and maintain accreditation. A specialized body conducting accreditation of a program preparing students for a profession or occupation is often closely associated with professional associations in the field.

Both institutional and specialized bodies conduct the accreditation process using a common pattern. The pattern requires integral self-study of the institution or program, followed by an on-site visit by an evaluation team, and a subsequent review and decision by a central governing group. Within this general pattern the various accrediting bodies have developed a variety of individual procedures adapted to their own circumstances. Increasingly, attention has been given to educational outcomes as a basis for evaluation.

Members of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation have been found by COPA to meet specific criteria of procedure and organization regarded as necessary for the effective conduct of the accrediting process. A COPA-recognized accediting body can be regarded as qualified to conduct evaluations of institutions and/or programs seeking accreditation, and accreditation by such bodies is generally recognized and accepted in higher education.

Institutional or specialized accreditation cannot guarantee the quality of individual graduates or of individual courses within an institution or program, but can give reasonable assurance of the context and quality of the education offered.

II

An institutional accrediting body considers the characteristics of whole institutions. For this reason an institutional accrediting body gives attention not only to the educational offerings of the institutions it accredits, but also to other such institutional characteristics as the student personnel services, financial conditions, and administrative strength.

The criteria of an institutional accrediting body are broad, as is demanded by the attention to an entire institution and by the presence in the United States of postsecondary institutions of widely different purposes and scopes. Such criteria also provide encouragement to institutions to try innovative curricula and procedures, and to adopt them when they prove successful. The accreditation of an institution by an institutional accrediting body certifies to the general public that the institution:

a. Has appropriate purposes;
b. Has the resources needed to accomplish its purposes;
c. Can demonstrate that it is accomplishing its purposes;
d. Gives reason to believe that it will continue to accomplish its purposes.

Institutional improvement is encouraged by an institutional accrediting body through the requirement that the accredited institution conducts periodic self-evaluations seeking to identify what the institution does well, determining the areas in which improvement is needed, and developing plans to address needed improvements. While the certification of accreditation indicates an acceptable level of institutional quality, an institution, however excellent, is capable of improvement, which must come from its own clear identification and understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

Institutional improvement is also encouraged by the institutional accrediting body through the advice and counsel provided by the visiting team, which comprises experienced educators drawn primarily from accredited institutions, and by the publications of the accrediting body.

III

A specialized accrediting body focuses its attention on a particular program within an institution of higher education. The close relationship of the specialized accrediting body with the professional association for the field helps insure that the requirements for accreditation are related to the current requirements for professional practice.

In a number of fields (e.g., medicine, law, dentistry) graduation from an accredited program in the field is a requirement for receiving a license to practice in the field. Thus specialized accreditation is recognized as providing a basic assurance of the scope and quality of professional or occupational preparation. This focus of specialized accreditation leads to accreditation requirements that are generally sharply directed to the nature of the program, including specific requirements for resources needed to provide a program satisfactory for professional preparation. Because of this limitation of focus to a single program, many specialized accrediting bodies require that the institution offering the program be institutionally accredited before consideration can be given to program accreditation.

Specialized accreditation encourages program improvement by application of specific accreditation requirements to measure characteristics of a program and by making judgments about the overall quality of the program. For a non-accredited program, the accreditation requirements serve as specific goals to be achieved. In addition to accrediting standards, assistance for program improvement is provided through the counsel of the accreditation visiting team members, which include practitioners of the profession and experienced and successful faculty members and administrators in other institutions.

IV

Institutional and specialized accreditation are complementary. The focus of an institutional accrediting body on an institution as a total operating unit provides assurance that the general characteristics of the institution have been examined and found to be satisfactory. The focus of a specialized accrediting body on a specific program provides assurance that the details of that particular program meet the external accreditation standards. Institutional accreditation, concerned with evaluating the institution as a whole, does not seek to deal with any particular program in great detail although programs are reviewed as a part of the consideration of the entire institution. Specialized accreditation, speaking to a specific program, does not seek to deal significantly with the general conditions of the institution, although certain general conditions are considered in the context in which the accredited program is offered. Occasionally there are institutions offering but a single program ("free-standing" schools), which may seek institutional and/or specialized accreditation. In such cases, the certification of the accreditation is that appropriate to either institutional or specialized accreditation, and does not imply both certifications, although a specialized body accrediting such an institution is expected to look at the whole institution, just as the institutional body is expected to consider the single educational program.

V

In fulfilling its two purposes, quality assurance and institutional and program improvement, accreditation provides service of value to several constituencies:

To the **Public,** the values of accreditation include:

a. An assurance of external evaluation of the institution or program, and a finding that there is conformity to general expectations in higher education or the professional field;

b. An identification of institutions and programs which have voluntarily undertaken explicit activities directed at improving the quality of the institution and its professional programs, and are carrying them out successfully;

c. An improvement in the professional services available to the public, as accredited programs modify their requirements to reflect changes in knowledge and practice generally accepted in the field;

d. A decreased need for intervention by public agencies in the operations of educational institutions, since their institutions through accreditation are providing privately for the maintenance and enhancement of educational quality.

To **Students,** accreditation provides:

a. An assurance that the educational activities of an accredited institution or program have been found to be satisfactory, and therefore meet the needs of students;

b. Assistance in the transfer of credits between institutions, or in the admission of students to advanced degrees through the general acceptance of credits among accredited institutions when the performance of the student has been satisfactory and the credits to be transferred are appropriate to the receiving institution;

c. A prerequisite in many cases for entering a profession.

Institutions of higher education benefit from accreditation through:

a. The stimulus provided for self-evaluation and self-directed institutional and program improvement;

b. The strengthening of institutional and program self-evaluation by the review and counsel provided through the accrediting body;

c. The application of criteria of accrediting bodies, generally accepted throughout higher education, which help guard against external encroachments harmful to institutional or program quality by providing benchmarks independent of forces that might impinge on individual institutions;

d. The enhancing of the reputation of an accredited institution or program because of public regard for accreditation;

e. The use of accreditation as one means by which an institution can gain eligibility for the participation of itself and its students in certain programs of governmental aid to postsecondary education; accreditation is also usually relied upon by private foundations as a highly desirable indicator of institutional and program quality.

Accreditation serves the **Professions** by:

a. Providing a means for the participation of practitioners in setting the requirements for preparation to enter the professions;

b. Contributing to the unity of the professions by bringing together practitioners, teachers and students in an activity directed at improving professional preparation and professional practice.

Adopted by the COPA Board April 15, 1982

Joint Policy Statement on Transfer and Award of Academic Credit

COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITATION • AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION/COMMISSION ON EDUCATIONAL CREDIT • AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE REGISTRARS AND ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

This statement is directed to institutions of postsecondary education and others concerned with the transfer of academic credit among institutions and award of academic credit for extra-institutional learning. Basic to this statement is the principle that each institution is responsible for determining its own policies and practices with regard to the transfer and award of credit. Institutions are encouraged to review their policies and practices periodically to assure that they accomplish the institution's objectives and that they function in a manner that is fair and equitable to students. Any statements, this one or others referred to, should be used as guides, not as substitutes, for institutional policies and practices.

Transfer of credit is a concept that now involves transfer between dissimilar institutions and curricula and recognition of extra-institutional learning, as well as transfer between institutions and curricula of similar characteristics. As their personal circumstances and educational objectives change, students seek to have their learning, wherever and however attained, recognized by institutions where they enroll for further study. It is important for reasons of social equity and educational effectiveness, as well as the wise use of resources, for all institutions to develop reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for acceptance of transfer credit. Such policies and procedures should provide maximum consideration for the individual student who has changed institutions or objectives. It is the receiving institution's responsibility to provide reasonable and definitive policies and procedures for determining a student's knowledge in required subject areas. All institutions have a responsibility to furnish transcripts and other documents necessary for a receiving institution to judge the quality and quantity of the work. Institutions also have a responsibility to advise the students that the work reflected on the transcript may or may not be accepted by a receiving institution.

Inter-institutional Transfer of Credit

Transfer of credit from one institution to another involves at least the following three considerations:

1. The educational quality of the institution from which the student transfers;
2. The comparability of the nature, content, and level of credit earned to that offered by the receiving institution; and
3. The appropriateness and applicability of the credit earned to the programs offered by the receiving institution, in light of the student's educational goals.

Accredited Institutions

Accreditation speaks primarily to the first of these considerations, serving as the basic indicator that an institution meets certain minimum standards. Users of accreditation are urged to give careful attention to the accreditation conferred by accrediting bodies recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA). COPA has a formal process of recognition which requires that any accrediting body so recognized must meet the same standards. Under these standards, COPA has recognized a number of accrediting bodies, including:

1. Regional accrediting commissions (which historically accredited the more traditional colleges and universities but which now accredit proprietary, vocational-technical, and single-purpose institutions as well);
2. National accrediting bodies that accredit various kinds of specialized institutions; and
3. Certain professional organizations that accredit free-standing professional schools, in addition to programs within multi-purpose institutions. (COPA annually publishes a list of recognized accrediting bodies, as well as a directory of institutions accredited by these organizations.)

Although accrediting agencies vary in the ways they are organized and in their statements of scope and mission, all accrediting bodies that meet COPA's standards for recognition function to assure that the institutions or programs they accredit have met generally accepted minimum standards for accreditation.

Comparability and Applicability

Comparability of the nature, content, and level of transfer credit and the appropriateness and applicability of the credit earned to programs offered by the receiving institution are as important in the evaluation process as the accreditation status of the institution at which the transfer credit was awarded. Since accreditation does not address these questions, this information must be obtained from catalogues and other materials and from direct contact between knowledgeable and experienced faculty and staff at both the receiving and sending institutions. When such considerations as comparability and appropriateness of credit are satisfied, however, the receiving institution should have reasonable confidence that students from accredited institutions are qualified to undertake the receiving institution's educational program.

Accreditation affords reason for confidence in an institution's or a program's purposes, in the appropriateness of its resources and plans for carrying out these purposes, and in its effectiveness in accomplishing its goals, insofar as these things can be judged. Accreditation speaks to the probability, but does not guarantee, that students have met acceptable standards of educational accomplishment.

Admissions and Degree Purposes

At some institutions there may be differences between the acceptance of credit for admission purposes and the applicability of credit for degree purposes. A receiving institution may accept previous work, place credit value on it, and enter it on the transcript. However, that previous work, because of its nature and not its inherent quality, may be determined to have no applicability to a specific degree to be pursued by the student.

Institutions have a responsibility to make this distinction, and its implications, clear to students before they decide to enroll. This should be a matter of full disclosure, with the best interests of the student in mind. Institutions also should make every reasonable effort to reduce the gap between credits accepted and credits applied toward an educational credential.

Unaccredited Institutions

Institutions of postsecondary education that are not accredited by COPA-recognized accedited bodies may lack that status for reasons unrelated to questions of quality. Such institutions, however, cannot provide a reliable, third-party assurance that they meet or exceed minimum standards. That being the case, students transferring from such institutions may encounter special problems in gaining acceptance and transferring credits to accredited institutions. Institutions admitting students from unaccredited institutions should take special steps to validate credits previously earned.

Foreign Institutions

In most cases, foreign institutions are chartered and authorized by their national governments, usually through a ministry of education. Although this provides for a standardization within a country, it does not produce useful information about comparability from one country to another. No other nation has a system comparable to voluntary accreditation. The Division of Higher Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is engaged in a project to develop international compacts for the acceptance of educational credentials. At the operational level, four organizations—the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE), the National Council on the Evaluation of Foreign Student Credentials (CEC), the National Association for Foreign Student Admissions (NAFA), and the National Liaison Committee on Foreign Student Admissions (NLC)—often can assist institutions by distributing general guidelines on admission and placement of foreign students. Equivalency or placement recommendations are to be evaluated in terms of the programs and policies of the individual receiving institution.

Validation of Extra-institutional and Experiential Learning for Transfer Purposes

Transfer-of-credit policies should encompass educational accomplishment attained in extra-institutional settings as well as at accredited postsecondary institutions. In deciding on the award of credit for extra-institutional learning, institutions will find the services of the American Council on Education's Office of Educational Credit helpful. One of the Office's functions is to operate and foster programs to determine credit equivalencies for various modes of extra-institutional learning. The Office maintains evaluation programs for formally structured courses offered by the military, and civilian noncollegiate sponsors such as business, corporations, government agencies, and labor unions. Evaluation services are also available for examination programs, for occupations with validated job proficiency evaluation systems, and for correspondence courses offered by schools accredited by the National Home Study Council. The results are published in a Guide series. Another resource is the General Education Development (GED) Testing Program, which provides a means for assessing high school equivalency.

For learning that has not been validated through the ACE formal credit recommendation process or through credit-by-examination programs, institutions are urged to explore the Council for Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL) procedures and processes. Pertinent CAEL publications designed for this purpose are also listed.

Uses of this Statement

This statement has been endorsed by the three national associations most concerned with practices in the area of transfer and award of credit—the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the American Council on Education/Commission on Educational Credit, and the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

Institutions are encouraged to use this statement as a basis for discussions in developing or reviewing institutional policies with regard to transfer. If the statement reflects an institution's policies, that institution might want to use this publication to inform faculty, staff, and students.

It is recommended that accrediting bodies reflect the essential precepts of this statement in their criteria.

Adopted by the COPA Board
October 10, 1978

Approved by the American Council on
Education/Commission on Educational Credit
December 5, 1978

Approved by the Executive Committee, American Association of Collegiate
Registrars and Admissions Officers
November 21, 1978

Policy Statement on Principles of Good Practice in Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and Representation of Accredited Status

All accredited postsecondary institutions, or individuals acting on their behalf, must exhibit integrity and responsibility in advertising, student recruitment, and representation of accredited status. Responsible self-regulation requires rigorous attention to principles of good practice.

I

Advertising, Publications, Promotional Literature

1. Educational programs and services offered should be the primary emphasis of all advertisements, publications, promotional literature, and recruitment activities.
2. All statements and representations should be clear, factually accurate, and current. Supporting information should be kept on file and readily available for review.
3. Catalogs and other official publications should be readily available and accurately depict:
    a. institutional purposes and objectives;
    b. entrance requirements and procedures;
    c. basic information on programs and courses, with required sequences and frequency of course offerings explicitly stated;
    d. degree and program completion requirements, including length of time required to obtain a degree or certification of completion;
    e. faculty (full-time and part-time listed separately) with degrees held and the conferring institution;
    f. institutional facilities readily available for educational use;
    g. rules and regulations for conduct;
    h. tuition, fees, and other program costs;
    i. opportunities and requirements for financial aid;
    j. policies and procedures for refunding fees and charges to students who withdraw from enrollment.[1]
4. In college catalogs and/or official publications describing career opportunities, clear and accurate information should be provided on:
    a. national and/or state legal requirements for eligibility for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered;
    b. any unique requirements for career paths, or for employment and advancement opportunities in the profession or occupation described.

II

Student Recruitment for Admissions[2]

1. Student recruitment should be conducted by well-qualified admissions officers and trained volunteers whose credentials, purposes, and position or affiliation with the institution are clearly specified.
2. Independent contractors or agents used by the institution for recruiting purposes shall be governed by the same principles as institutional admissions officers and volunteers.
3. The following practices in student recruitment are to be scrupulously avoided:
    a. assuring employment unless employment arrangements have been made and can be verified;
    b. misrepresenting job placement and employment opportunities for graduates;
    c. misrepresenting program costs;
    d. misrepresenting abilities required to complete intended program;
    e. offering to agencies or individual persons money or inducements other than educational services of the institution in exchange for student enrollment. (Except for awards of privately endowed restricted funds, grants or scholarships are to be offered only on the basis of specific criteria related to merit or financial need.)

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[1] See ACE Guidelines #1: "Policy Guidelines for Refund of Student Charges"

[2] See ACE Guidelines #2: "Joint Statement of Principles of Good Practice in College Admissions and Recruitment"

III
Representation of Accredited Status

1. The term "accreditation" is to be used only when accredited status is conferred by an accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and/or the U.S. Secretary of Education.
2. No statement should be made about possible future accreditation status or qualification not yet conferred by the accrediting body. Statements like the following are not permissible: "(Name of institution) has applied for candidacy with the Commission on Colleges of the ____________ Association"; "The ___________ program is being evaluated by the National Association of _________, and it is anticipated that accreditation will be granted in the near future".
3. Any reference to state approval should be limited to a brief statement concerning the actual charter, incorporation, license or registration given.
4. The phrase "fully accredited" should be avoided, since no partial accreditation is possible.
5. When accredited status is affirmed in institutional catalogs and other offfical publications, it should be stated accurately and fully in a comprehensive statement, including:
   a. identifying the accrediting body by name;
   b. indicating the scope of accreditation as:
      (1) institutional (regional or national);

      Example:

      The University of Southern Yukon is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Northwest Association, an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).

      (2) programmatic (curriculum or unit accredited must be specified);

      Examples:

      Programs in (Civil Engineering and Aeronautical Engineering) are accredited by the Accrediting Board for Engineering and Technology, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).

      The Department of Music at the University of Hiawatha is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).

      Programs for the preparation of elementary, secondary, and special education teachers at the bachelor's and master's level, for the preparation of guidance counselors at the master's and specialist degree level, and for school superintendents at the specialist and doctoral degree level are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (and/or the U.S. Department of Education).
6. The accredited status of a program should not be misrepresented.
   a. The accreditation granted by an institutional accrediting body has reference to the quality of the institution as a whole. Since institutional accreditation does not imply specific accreditation of any particular program in the institution, statements like "this program is accredited", or "this degree is accredited", are incorrect and misleading.
   b. "Free-standing" institutions offering programs in a single field, e.g., a school of art, engineering, theology, granted accreditation by a regional or national institutional accrediting body alone, should clearly state that this accreditation does not imply specialized accreditation of the program offered.

••••

Member agencies of COPA should assume responsibility for informing the COPA office of improper or misleading advertising or unethical practices which come to their attention, so that COPA may inform the appropriate accrediting association or associations.

Adopted by the COPA Board
April 20, 1983

Policy Statement on Considerations When Closing A Postsecondary Educational Institution

I. Preparing the Way

A decision to close an educational institution requires thoughtful planning and careful consultation with all affected constituencies. Every effort should be devoted to informing each constituency as fully as possible about the conditions requiring consideration of a decision of such importance, and all available information should be shared. Before closing, such alternatives as merging with another institution, forming a consortium, or participating in extensive inter-institutional sharing and cooperation should be carefully considered. As much as possible, the determination to close an institution should involve a consultative process but responsibility for the final decision to close rests with the board of governors.

Tradition and sentiment are important considerations, but sentimentality should not be allowed to determine events. A decision to close should never be made or reversed simply on the basis of fears, hopes or aspirations that have little relation to reality. Neither should it be delayed to the point where the institution has lost its viability and its educational program no longer retains quality and integrity. Since the immediate interests of current students and faculty are most directly affected, their present and future prospects require especially sensitive attention and involvement.

It is assumed that closing an institution means a decision permanently to discontinue its educational activities, not merely to suspend them for an indefinite period in the hope that circumstances may someday permit their resumption. But it should be noted that most institutions of higher education are corporations established under the provisions of state law, and as such may have legal responsibilities (holding title to real property, for example) that may necessitate the continued existence of the corporation after the educational activities of the institution have been terminated. Indeed, it is probable that such continued corporate existence, at least for a time, will prove to be the usual situation. It is unlikely that in most cases corporate existence and educational activities can be terminated simultaneously.

II. Closing an Institution

A decision to close requires specific plans for providing in appropriate ways for the students, the faculty, the administrative and support staff, and for the disposition of the institution's assets. Many considerations bear upon closing an educational institution, and each situation will be unique. Public institutions, seminaries, church related colleges—the nature and sponsorship of each institution require different emphasis and pose particular conditions to be met in reaching and carrying out the ultimate decision. Nevertheless general guidelines may be helpful to each institution considering closing.

This statement makes only incidental reference to such corporate responsibilities and always in the educational context. It is imperative, therefore, that a Board of Trustees considering closing an institution under its care should be guided not only by guidelines such as these and by the state educational authorities, but also by advice of legal counsel. Special counsel to advise with respect to problems of closing may be desirable for the institution. Institutional and specialized accrediting bodies should also be consulted and be kept fully apprised of developments.

A. The Students

Students who have not completed their degrees should be provided for according to their academic needs. Arrangements for transfer to other institutions will require complete academic records and all other related information gathered in dossiers which can be transmitted promptly to receiving institutions. Agreements made with other institutions to receive transferring students and to accept their records should be in writing. Where financial aid is concerned, particularly federal or state grants, arrangements should be made with the appropriate agencies to transfer the grants to the receiving institutions. Where such arrangements cannot be completed, students should be fully informed. In cases where students have held institutional scholarships or grants and there are available funds which can legally be used to support students while completing degrees at other institutions, appropriate agreements should be negotiated.

B. Academic Records and Financial Aid Transcripts

All academic, financial aid information, and other records should be prepared for permanent filing, including microfilming. Arrangements should be made with the state department of higher education or other appropriate agency for filing of student records. If there is no state educational agency which can receive records, arrangements should be made with another college or university or with the state archives to preserve the records. Notification should be sent to every current and past student indicating where the records are being stored and what the accessibility to those records will be. Where possible, a copy of a student's record should also be forwarded to the individual student.

C. Completion of Institutional Obligations

When a student chooses to continue at another institution but is within a year to 18 months of completing an academic degree in the closing institution, arrangements may be made to permit that student to complete the requirements for a degree elsewhere but to receive it from the closed institution. This may require special action by the appropriate state agency. Such arrangements should also include provision for continuation of the institution's accreditation only for this purpose by the accrediting agency involved. These steps normally require the institution to continue as a legal corporate entity for 12 to 18 months beyond the closing date, but any such arrangement must be established in careful consultation with the appropriate authorities and with their written consent.

D. Provision for Faculty and Staff

In every possible case, the institution should arrange for continuation of those faculty and staff who will be necessary for the completion of the institution's work up to the closing date. When faculty and staff are no longer needed, the institution should make every effort to assist them in finding alternative employment. It should be understood that the institution can make no guarantees, but genuinely good faith efforts to assist in relocation and reassignment are essential. In the event that faculty or staff members find new positions, early resignations should be accepted.

III.
The Final Determination

Determinations must be made to allocate whatever financial resources and assets remain after the basic needs of current students, faculty and staff are provided for. When the financial resources of the institution are inadequate to honor commitments, the Board should investigate what alternatives and protection are available under applicable bankruptcy laws before deciding to close. If funds are insufficient to maintain normal operations through the end of the closing process, the institution should not overlook the possibility of soliciting onetime gifts and donations to assist in fulfilling its final obligations.

Every effort should be made to develop publicly defensible policies for dividing the resources equitably among those with claims against the institution. One of the best ways of achieving this goal is to involve potential claimants in the process of developing the policies. Time and effort devoted to carrying the process to a judicious conclusion may considerably reduce the likelihood of lawsuits or other forms of confrontation.

It is impossible to anticipate in advance the many claims that might be made against remaining resources of an institution, but the following three principles may help to sort out possible claims and to set priorities:

(a) Students have the right to expect basic minimal services during the final semester, not only in the academic division, but also in the business office, financial aid office, registrar's office, counseling and other essential support services. Staff should be retained long enough to provide these services. It may be appropriate to offer special incentives to keep key personnel present.

(b) Reasonable notice is given to all employees, explaining the possibility of early termination of contracts and that the reasons for retaining some personnel longer than others are based on satisfying the minimal needs of students and the legal requirements for closing.

(c) Every effort should be made to honor long-term financial obligations (loans, debentures, etc.) even though the parties holding such claims may choose not to press them.

IV.
The Closing Date

The Board of Trustees should take a formal vote to terminate the institution on a specified date. That date will depend on a number of factors including the decision to file or not to file for bankruptcy. Another key factor is whether or not all obligations to students will have been satisfactorily discharged. This is particularly important if the decision is made to allow seniors in their final year to graduate from the institution by completing their degree requirements elsewhere. If such arrangements are made, the Board must be sure to take the legal action necessary to permit awarding degrees after the institution otherwise ceases to function. Normally, formal vote to award a degree is made after all requirements have been met, but it is legally possible to make arrangements for a student to complete the requirements for a degree at another institution and to receive the degree from the closed institution. These requirements must be clearly specified along with a deadline for completion. Also the Board must identify the person or persons authorized to determine whether or not these requirements have in fact been satisfied. Arrangements must be completed with the appropriate state and accrediting agencies in advance in order to assure that the degree is awarded by a legally authorized and accredited institution.

V.
Disposition of Assets

In the case of a not-for-profit institution, the legal requirements of the state and the federal government must be carefully examined with respect to the disposition of institutional assets. Arrangements for the sale of the physical plant, equipment, the library, special collections, art, or other funds must be explored with legal counsel. In the case of wills, endowments, or special grants, the institution should discuss with the donors, grantors, executors of estates, and other providers of special funds arrangements to accommodate their wishes. State laws regarding the disposition of funds from a non-profit institution must be meticulously followed.

All concerned federal and state agencies need to be apprised of the institution's situation and any obligations relating to estate or federal funds need to be cleared with the proper agencies.

VI.
Other Considerations

The institution should establish a clear understanding with its creditors and all other agencies involved with its activities to assure that their claims and interests will be properly processed. Insofar as possible, the institution should assure that its final arrangements will not be subject to later legal proceedings which might jeopardize the records or status of its students or faculty.

VII.
Conclusion

The closing of an educational institution is never a happy event. Nevertheless, such action can be rendered less traumatic by careful attention to the details of the legal and moral obligations of the institution. Closing will be marked by sadness, but well-planned and conscientious efforts to assure that the institutions's students, faculty, and staff will be optimally provided for and that its assets will be used in ways that will honor the intentions of the original donors should help in avoiding bitterness and rancor. A final report on the closing should be submitted to the appropriate accrediting and state agencies for their records.

Note: The most recent and comprehensive reference work, which includes summaries of state regulations regarding disposition of student records and dissolution of non-profit colleges and universities is the following:

O'Neill, Joseph P. and Barnett, Samuel, *Colleges and Corporate Change: Merger, Bankruptcy, and Closure*, Princeton, N.J., Conference University Press, 1980.

Adopted by the COPA Board
April 15, 1982

Policy Statement on Accreditation and Authorization of Distance Learning Through Telecommunications

Introduction

This Statement summarizes the results of a two year study on assessing long distance learning by telecommunications. The study, co-sponsored by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association, focused on the rapid development and use of telecommunications to offer postsecondary education and the need to ensure the quality and integrity of this instructional activity. It was supported by a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, whose views it does not necessarily reflect.

A series of task forces and advisory committees were responsible for developing the components in the Statement. During their deliberations, each group affirmed the need to address the quality of telecommunications instruction within the existing assessment framework, which includes state authorization, non-governmental voluntary accreditation, and institutional self-regulation. This belief is reinforced in the principles and procedures which follow. The following definition was used during the study.

Telecommunications instruction is any course or series of courses offered or sponsored by a postsecondary education institution, consortium of institutions, or other organization, for which credit is offered or awarded toward a certificate, diploma, or degree. The course or courses must have, as the primary mode of delivery, television, video cassette or disc, film, radio, computer, or other supportive devices which build upon the audio-video format. In many instances, the telecommunications course is supported by textbooks, study guides, library resources, and other study aids, and may also involve personal interaction with faculty, tutors, or other educational personnel by telephone, mail, or in face-to-face meetings.

I.
General Principles

A. The assessment of programs delivered by telecommunications should take place within the context of an institution's or other organization's total education mission.

B. The policies and procedures for assessing long distance learning should not discourage the development and use of technology for educational purposes. Specific requirements by state authorizing agencies and accrediting bodies should accommodate constructive innovation.

C. The focus of states' authorization and of non-governmental accreditation activity in long distance learning by telecommunications should be on postsecondary institutions and other organizations which award credit that can be applied toward academic degrees, or which provide other credentials that have credit bearing significance such as programs leading to certification of proficiency or licensure. Authorization and accreditation requirements should not apply to those institutions and organizations which are involved only in the production of courses or support materials.

D. State authorization activities are and should be the initial step and a necessary prerequisite to accreditation in the assessment of long distance learning by telecommunications.

E. The states have a responsibility in consumer protection which should be reinforced as necessary. States without adequate authorization legislation are urged to develop such legislation.

F. Institutions and other organizations involved in telecommunications instruction, as in other instructional activities, should use and further develop rigorous outcome measures to assess program effectiveness. Accrediting bodies and state authorizing agencies should validate and use such measures to the greatest possible extent in their evaluation activities.

G. The focus of the assessment activity for long distance learning by telecommunications conducted by educational institutions should be accreditation, either institutional or professional as appropriate to the offerings.

H. The interests of higher education and the general public are best served when institutions voluntarily seek appropriate approval even in situations in which they may not be required to do so. Toward this end, the accreditation and authorization of telecommunications-based educational programs should be thorough and reasonable. If this can be accomplished, then the institutional burden of seeking approval will be a reasonable price to pay for increased public confidence.

I. The necessity of an institution's seeking state authorization depends in large measure upon the institution's "physical presence" in the state or states in which it wishes to operate. Although there is yet no clear legal definition of "physical presence" the following guidelines have been developed:
   1. The act of transmitting an electronic signal into another state without any other contact within that state does not, under current laws, constitute physical presence. Similarly, the use of an interstate interactive computer system to deliver educational services, absent any other in-state contact, would not necessarily create jurisdiction over the out-of-state institution.
   2. The use of interstate mail and telephone services to provide instructional and related services to students involves protected interstate commerce and, therefore, generally cannot be subjected to state regulation.
   3. The presence of an institutional recruiter (agent) in a state may constitute sufficient physical presence of an institution in that state to subject it to licensure. It may also subject the institution to other legal constraints.
   4. Support services that include institutional representatives in a state, such as tutors, counselors, or instructors, in most instances establish physical presence sufficient to afford the state jurisdiction through its approval mechanism.

II. Procedures

A. A primary and fundamental objective is the development of close working relations among state authorizing agencies, accrediting bodies, and institutions. They should undertake to reexamine and develop regulations, standards, and criteria for use in the evaluation of instruction delivered by telecommunications. State agencies and accrediting bodies should work together to ensure that state authorization provisions and procedures and accrediting standards complement each other. By undertaking this joint effort, a second objective of reducing the multiple and repetitive procedures currently required for institutions operating in several jurisdictions may be realized. The following procedures are suggested as an initial step toward meeting those objectives:
   1. With respect to the states:
      a. States should provide mechanisms to exchange information with each other and with accrediting bodies concerning standards, procedures, and actions relating to the authorization of institutions to operate and grant degrees.
      b. State authorizing agencies should seek more uniform authorization requirements so that educational institutions eventually can receive authorization in all jurisdictions through common assessment procedures.
      c. The states have constitutional and statutory responsibility to provide and supervise education. In those states where statutes providing supervision of postsecondary institutions currently do not exist, appropriate legislation should be sought, and the means for reviewing and authorizing educational operations and institutions should be established. Due consideration should be given to instruction delivered by telecommunications.
      d. The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association should continue to work closely with the states to attain these objectives.
   2. With respect to regional, national, and specialized accrediting bodies:
      a. Accrediting bodies should continue to develop standards and procedures for off-campus programs, including instruction delivered by telecommunications, in harmony with the COPA policy statement on off-campus operations and institutional and accrediting bodies' agreements of understanding.
      b. Accrediting bodies, through COPA, should create better mechanisms for the exchange of information with each other and with all affected state agencies concerning standards, procedures, and actions relating to the accredita-

tion of institutions and programs and their off-campus activities, including instruction delivered by telecommunications.

c. Accrediting bodies, as they do now for all other programs, should require institutions involved in long distance learning by telecommunications to have the appropriate authorization to operate in any state in which they wish to offer instruction.

d. Accrediting bodies should require demonstration by an institution or, in the case of specialized accreditation, by the program under evaluation that its students achieve the educational objectives set for them. Currently accepted criteria of accreditation can be applied to institutions and programs offering long distance learning or using telecommunications and other electronic techniques. These criteria require, in accordance with accreditation standards, that institutions or programs:

   1) Have clearly defined and appropriate educational objectives.

   2) Have the resources and structure needed to accomplish these objectives.

   3) Demonstrate that these objectives are being accomplished.

   4) Give reasons to believe that these objectives will continue to be accomplished.

e. The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation should continue to work closely with accrediting bodies to attain these objectives.

III. Implementation

The following specific procedures are suggested to effect these recommendations:

A. An institution should give to the appropriate state agencies and accrediting bodies advance notice of intent to initiate programs using telecommunications that provide credit applicable toward degrees.

B. To obtain appropriate recognition from state agencies and accrediting bodies, the following strategy is suggested:

   1. An institution would provide documentation on the objectives and scope of its programs using telecommunications, including provision for instruction and instructional support. This information would be provided on the Institutional Profile for Telecommunications Instruction, a document designed to provide state agencies and accrediting bodies with crucial information about telecommunications-based activities.

   2. State agencies and accrediting bodies would review the documentation to determine whether the instruction and instructional support meet the established requirements and standards.

   3. The documentation would be audited, as appropriate, by state agencies and accrediting bodies and certified as being complete, accurate, and representative of the institution's telecommunications activities. The certified documentation could then be made available to any state agency or accrediting body needing such information.

   4. If proper quality and quality controls are evident, approval would be granted by state agencies and accrediting bodies to include the activity within the institution's recognized status.

   5. If necessary to reach a sound decision, a state agency or accrediting body may request additional documentation or schedule an on-site visit. The institution, for its part, may withdraw its request without prejudice or appeal any adverse decision to the appropriate body or bodies consistent with due process procedures.

C. Interregional or other agreements envisioning a single accrediting activity for an institution, conducted cooperatively by two or more accrediting bodies, should be fully implemented as they relate to long distance learning so that the accreditation of an institution can be conducted in a single process.

Conclusion

The principles and procedures recommended in this Statement were formulated to ensure the highest quality and integrity of instruction delivered by telecommunications. If adopted by state authorizing agencies and accrediting bodies, there will be a better likelihood of increased cooperation between them, and an important step will have been taken toward instituting common, reasonable and thorough approval practices.

Adopted by the COPA Board
October 11, 1984

and by the

State Higher Education Executive Officers Association
August 1, 1984

Policy Statement on Trustee Involvement in the Accreditation Process

The ultimate responsibility for the integrity and autonomy of colleges and universities rests with the lay members of governing boards. The participation of trustees in the processes of voluntary accreditation can give them an immediate and effective grasp of their critical task and help to strengthen the self-regulatory system of quality assessment and quality-enhancement. The best safeguard against pressures toward intrusion by external agencies is the readiness of governing boards to utilize the procedures of accreditation as a means of accomplishing a major part of the central business of the boards themselves for undertaking institutional planning and periodic evaluation.

Trustees and regents should participate constructively as stewards and policy makers in the various aspects of the accrediting process—the self-study, interaction with the visiting team, review of final evaluation reports and recommendations—in ways determined by the needs, size and complexity of the institution and the style and organization of the board. Informed trustees will enhance the effectiveness of the accrediting process and better discharge their own share of responsibility for the quality of the educational programs of the institutions they serve.

Consistent with these principles, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation calls attention to the statement on "The Board's Role in Accreditation" adopted by the Association of Governing Boards and urges its consideration and broad dissemination.

Adopted by the COPA Board
October 11, 1984

Policy Statement on Rights and Responsibilities of Accrediting Bodies and Institutions in the Accrediting Process

Preface

American postsecondary education reflects a diverse, semi-autonomous and independent composite of institutions and programs. In the diversity of the system lies its strength. By design, postsecondary education functions with considerable latitude and few restrictions. Compared with most other countries, there has been a remarkable degree of freedom from government regulation and intrusion. Accreditation serves as the balance between institutional autonomy, independence and freedom and the institution's or program's responsibilities to students, the public, the profession and various levels of governments. As a self-regulatory process, voluntary accreditation includes certain rights and responsibilities for both institutions/programs and accrediting bodies. Coupled with institutional or programmatic rights and responsibilities are rights and responsibilities of accreditation that keep such institutions and programs responsive and ensure that they provide quality education. The national, nongovernmental accreditation system is the key in ensuring that education remains fundamentally sound, responsible, responsive and effective, thereby providing public confidence in the integrity and quality of educational institutions and programs.

Preconditions

A statement related to rights and responsibilities of institutions/programs and accrediting bodies is rooted in general assumptions:

1. That the institutions/programs and accrediting bodies are partners in the system of voluntary nongovernmental evaluation.
2. That there is a mutual commitment among institutions/programs and accrediting bodies to:
    - a. Voluntary self-regulation,
    - b. Assessment and enhancement of educational quality,
    - c. Candor,
    - d. Cooperation,
    - e. Integrity, and
    - f. Confidence and trust.

Given these preconditions there are certain reciprocal institutional/programmatic and accrediting body rights and responsibilities that relate directly: (1) to the development and promulgation of accreditation standards and (2) to the various stages of the accrediting process.

A. Development and Promulgation of Standards

Institutions/programs and accrediting bodies, in cooperation with each other, have the responsibility to:

1. Involve broad participation of affected constituencies in the development and acceptance of standards and policies.
2. Develop standards and policies which:
    - a. Are consistent with the purposes of accreditation,
    - b. Are sufficiently flexible to allow diversity and effective program development,
    - c. Allow and encourage institutional/programmatic freedom and autonomy,
    - d. Allow the institution/program to exercise its rights within a reasonable set of parameters relevant to the quality of education and, in professional fields, to prepare individuals effectively for practice in the profession.
3. Conduct periodic reviews of the standards.

B. Five Stages of Accreditation Actions or Process and Concomitant Statements of Rights and Responsibilities

The five process stages and concomitant statements of rights and responsibilities which follow are based on the standards and procedures currently utilized by COPA recognized accrediting bodies. Each declarative statement implies a reciprocal relationship of rights and responsibilities.

Stage 1: Basic Procedures

a. The institution/program develops and implements an institutional policy for seeking, securing and maintaining accredited status with institutional or specialized accrediting bodies.

b. The institution/program develops an effective mechanism to ensure the internal coordination of accrediting activities.
c. In corresponding with representatives on campus, the accrediting body routinely provides copies to the chief executive and, where appropriate, the chief academic officer and/or director of the program.
d. The accrediting body refrains from advertising or soliciting applications for accreditation from institutions/programs.

Stage 2: Information Requested and Supplied (Including the Self-Study)

a. The institution/program determines how it will conduct its self-study and the accrediting body specifies the items to be addressed in the report.
b. The accrediting body requires only information that is relevant to accrediting standards and policies, and, whenever possible, this information will be coordinated with information requested by other accrediting bodies.
c. The institution/program involves broad and appropriate constituent groups in the preparation and process of self-study.
d. The institution/program discloses to the accrediting body that information which is required to carry out the accrediting body's evaluation and accrediting functions (with due regard to individual privacy).
e. The accrediting body and institution/program respect the confidentiality of information required and evaluated in the accrediting process.

Stage 3: The Site Visit and Review

a. When requested by the institution/program, the accrediting body (in consultation with the institution/program and when feasible) conducts joint, concurrent, coordinated, consolidated or phased visits.
b. The accrediting body, in consultation with the institution/program, selects site visitors who are:
    1. Competent by virtue of experience, training and orientation,
    2. Sensitive to the uniqueness of the institution and/or program, and
    3. Impartial, objective and without conflict of interest.
c. The accrediting body ensures that the composition, team size and length of the visit are:
    1. Determined in consultation with the institution/program,
    2. Determined with regard to the size and complexity of the institution/program, and are
    3. Most appropriate to accomplish the objectives of the visit.
d. The institution/program provides maximum opportunity for communication with all relevant constituencies.
e. The accrediting body communicates its findings derived from the site visit to the institution/program.
f. The accrediting body ensures that the report identifies and distinguishes clearly between statements directly related to quality assessment and those representing suggestions for quality-improvement.
g. The accrediting body provides the chief executive officer of the institution (and the chief academic officer and/or the director of the program) with an opportunity to comment on the written report of the visiting team and to file supplemental materials pertinent to the facts and conclusions therein before the accrediting body takes action on the report.

Stage 4: The Decision, Including:

- commission action
- conveyance of action

- appeal
- public announcement of action

a. The accrediting body permits the withdrawal of a request for any status of accreditation at any time prior to the decision on that request.

b. The accrediting body makes decisions solely on the basis of published standards, policies and procedures using information available and made known to the institution/program.

c. The accrediting body avoids conflicts of interest in the decision making process.

d. The accrediting body ensures the confidentiality of those deliberations in which accrediting decisions are made, but due process will be observed in all deliberations.

e. The accrediting body notifies institutions and programs promptly in writing of accrediting decisions, giving reasons for the actions.

f. The accrediting body ensures that the communication of the final accrediting decision, i.e, the notification letter and/or final report, identifies and clearly distinguishes between statements directly related to quality-assessment and those representing suggestions for quality-improvement.

g. The institution/program has a right to appeal an accrediting decision in accordance with the policies of the accrediting body, and to maintain its accredited status during the appeal.

h. The accrediting body publishes accrediting decisions, both affirmative and negative, except for initial denial which need not be made public.

i. The accrediting body maintains the confidentiality of the final report but it may request that corrective action be taken if an institution/program releases information misrepresenting or distorting any accreditation action taken by the body or the status of affiliation with the accrediting body. If the institution/program is not prompt in taking corrective action, the accrediting body may further release a public statement providing the correct information.

Stage 5: Follow-Up (Including interim reports and reapplication)

a. The accrediting body can request periodic reports, special reports, and consultative activities relevant to the institution's/program's accreditation status.

b. The accrediting body provides written notice to the institution/program of the action taken in relation to a special report or visit.

c. Accrediting bodies may request the reevaluation of an institution/ program at any time for cause.

d. The institution/program has an obligation to inform the accrediting body of any substantive changes.

e. The institution/program has a right to have pertinent information provided concerning reapplication requirements for accreditation under the terms and conditions specified by the accrediting body.

f. Separate from the accrediting process leading to a decision on accredited status, the accrediting body assists and stimulates improvement of the educational effectiveness of an institution/program, and to this end makes provision for appropriate assistance.

Adopted by the COPA Board
April 19, 1985

Policy Statement on Validity and Reliability of Accrediting Body Standards and Process

In fulfilling its primary objectives—to signify that institutions and programs are meeting established standards and their own stated objectives, and to improve their quality—accreditation expects institutions and programs, as well as accrediting bodies, to have mechanisms in place for an ongoing process of self-appraisal. For accrediting bodies, this process necessitates continuing concern about two basic issues—the validity of the standards by which quality is assessed, and the validity and reliability of the accrediting process itself.

All COPA-recognized accrediting bodies should conduct regular assessment of their own standards and procedures. Accountability to the many publics which accreditation serves requires providing assurance that the objectives of the accrediting process are effectively being achieved. The Council is especially concerned for the integrity and consistency of the accrediting process, and supports all efforts to develop more effective mechanisms for review of accrediting body objectives, standards, and procedures. It calls attention to the procedures outlined in the report developed by its Committee on Validity and Reliability (October, 1985) as a possible resource for assessing the validity of standards and the validity and reliability of the accrediting process.

The following principles are central:

1. The quality of an entity or process can only be determined in terms of its specific objectives, functions, or purposes.
2. The quality of an accrediting program, i.e., the validity of its standards and the validity and reliability of its processes, can only be assessed in terms of the purposes or objectives of the accrediting activity.
3. The purposes or objectives of an accrediting body must be appropriate, clear, and explicit before any evaluation can be made.
4. The standards, i.e., those generalizable conditions or characteristics determined to be essential for the achievement of the objectives, must be derived from and be consistent with the objectives.
5. The procedures essential for the application of the standards should be derived from and consistent with the standards and objectives.
6. The validation of the accrediting process requires demonstrating that the procedures used by the accrediting body appropriately assess the institution/program against established standards, so that the conclusions reached about whether the standards are met are valid.
7. The reliability of the accrediting process requires that accrediting standards demonstrate over time and under varying circumstances that they are understood, interpreted, and applied consistently by all participants in the evaluation of institutions or programs that have significantly similar characteristics.

The Council expects these procedures to provide a resource to accrediting bodies in an ongoing review of their objectives, standards, and processes, and to contribute to better understanding on the part of institutional personnel and others about the rationale for the standards that are used in the accrediting process and the role they play in decision-making.

Adopted by the COPA Board
April 18, 1986

Guidelines on Interagency Cooperation in Accreditation

PREPARED BY THE TASK FORCE ON INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

Basic principles

Cooperation among accrediting agencies may occur in many areas and may take variety of forms. The programmatic accrediting agencies provide the institutional accrediting agencies with standards of excellence in the specialized fields and assistance in evaluating them. The institutional accrediting agencies in turn provide the programmatic accrediting agencies with assistance in an appraisal of the institution, especially institutional control and management. Institutional accrediting agencies, programmatic accrediting agencies, and institutions should work closely together in the total accrediting process.

It is the intent of this Task Force to identify a range of opportunities for cooperative endeavors, rather than to propose a single structure for cooperation. There is agreement that cooperation is a desirable goal and that sincere, continuing effort toward cooperation is essential if accreditation's position as a positive force is to be enhanced in advancing quality education.

Toward this end, the following principles are set forth

1. Facilitating cooperation between and among institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies should be an objective of COPA, the accrediting agencies, and the institutions served by them.
2. Consistent with the concept of voluntary accreditation, each institution of postsecondary education should decide for itself whether to seek accreditation by any appropriate agency or combination of agencies.
3. Institutions desiring coordinated accrediting activities, particularly among agencies accrediting programs located within the same academic administrative unit (i.e., a School of Professional Studies), should be offered every possible assistance and cooperation.
4. Coordination begins with the designation of responsibility within the institution for liaison with the various accrediting agencies.
5. To be successful, coordination requires advance planning by both the institution and the accrediting agency or agencies involved.
6. Representatives of each accrediting agency will be responsible to their parent agency for investigation and reporting activities carried out as part of the accrediting cycle.

Definitions and cooperative arrangements

For the purpose of distinguishing among institutional and programmatic agencies, the following operational definitions are presented:

1. **An institutional (general) accrediting agency** accredits an institution as a whole and therefore includes all areas, activities, and programs of the institution. Normally, institutional accreditation testifies to: (a) the appropriateness of the objectives of the institution; (b) the adequacy of its organization, program, and resources, both material and human, when viewed against its objectives and generally accepted accrediting standards; and (c) evidence of the accomplishment of institutional objectives in reasonable measure. Moreover, the criteria of eligibility provide that degree programs, however specialized, must rest upon a base of liberal or general studies required by all or most students. However, accreditation of the institution as a whole is not, and should not be interpreted as being, equivalent to specialized accreditation of a part or program of the institution and should not be represented as such.
2. **Programmatic (specialized) accrediting agencies** accredit program(s) within the total institution (or in the case of single purpose institutions, may accredit the institution as a whole). The focus of specialized accreditation is on the effectiveness with which the program meets its objectives and those of the institution, and the accrediting standards for quality education. Normally, specialized accreditation reviews the relationship of the program to the larger unit, the adequacy of the organization and resources for program maintenance and development, and evidence of accomplishment of programmatic objectives. However, specialized acceditation does

not purport to make judgments on the institution as a whole (except in some cases of single-purpose institutions).

The Study of Interagency Cooperation, undertaken by the Task Force, documented cooperative arrangements which have developed among accrediting agencies. The following relationships were identified:

1. Institutional and institutional accrediting agencies, including:
   - Regional and regional
   - Regional and national
   - National and national
   - Regional or national and programmatic (functioning as an institional)
2. Institutional and programmatic
3. Programmatic and programmatic

Each accrediting agency functioned in accordance with its own purpose and recognized scope of activity. The unique contribution of both institutional and programmatic accrediting to the total evaluative process was recognized, as were the possible benefits accruing to the institution, the program, and the agencies from the coordinated effort.

Guidelines for cooperation

1. **Institutional role:**
   The institution should assume a leadership role in suggesting how cooperating accrediting agencies can best work together to provide optimum service to the institution.
2. **Need for written agreements:**
   Written agreements should be established among accrediting agencies that propose to cooperate. In initial form these may be relatively simple and deal primarily with matters of principle, becoming more specific as the cooperating agencies resolve procedural differences through experience. Sharing of the written agreement with all participants in the accrediting process will reduce potential misunderstandings and conflicts.
3. **Designation of accrediting responsibility:**
   a. Between two or more institutional accrediting agencies

   — An institution with operations that cross regional boundaries must be prepared to deal with all of the regional accrediting agencies involved; however, the regional accrediting agency for the parent campus normally will serve as the coordinating agency.

   — A specialized institution for which there is a national specialized institutional accrediting agency (such as American Association of Bible Colleges, Association of Independent Colleges and Schools, National Association of Trade and Technical Schools, National Home Study Council) is encouraged to deal with the appropriate specialized agency. If the institution desires to seek only regional accreditation, the institution should so inform the specialized agency.

   — A specialized institution seeking accreditation from two or more national, specialized accrediting agencies must determine what constitutes its predominant emphasis (specialization), and that determination will identify the appropriate coordinating agency.

   — A specialized institution for which there is a programmatic accrediting agency that accredits free-standing specialized institutions (such as American Bar Association, Association of Theological Schools, National Association of Schools of Music, etc) is encouraged to deal with the appropriate programmatic agency. If the institution desires to seek accreditation from an institutional accrediting agency as well, the programmatic agency would serve as the coordinating agency. If the institution desires to seek only institutional accreditation, the institution should so inform the programmatic agency.

b. Between institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies

— When a multi-purpose institution seeks a coordinated accreditation process involving both an institutional accrediting agency and one or more programmatic accrediting agencies, the institutional accrediting agency will serve as the coordinating agency. In instances where there are one or more clusters of related programmatic agencies, there should be a coordinating agency for each cluster which in turn would work with the institutional accrediting agency.

— When external coordination is not possible, an institution should seek accreditation for an academic administrative unit or sub-unit within the institution after it has achieved appropriate accreditation of the more inclusive entity (total institution, college school, division, department, program—in that order).

c. Between programmatic accrediting agencies

— When an institution seeks accreditation involving two or more programmatic accrediting agencies (located within the same or in different academic administrative units), the chief administrative officer of the institution, with mutual agreement and consent of the involved accrediting agencies, shall designate the coordinating agency, with responsibility normally going to the agency representing the program with the largest enrollment. This agency will coordinate the accrediting activities (joint and or autonomous) consistent with the established guidelines.

4. **Accreditation standards:**

The accreditation standards of the participating accrediting agencies (institutional and programmatic) shall apply during the review. Team members should be aware of the range of standards being utilized. Procedures followed during the visit and the subsequent reporting phase must reflect the standards as required by each agency. In instances where standards may overlap or vary, the visit and the report must incorporate data relevant to the specific agencies.

5. **Contacts with institutions:**

Accrediting agencies which utilize staff pre-visits should arrange a joint institutional visit to negotiate details of the cooperative accrediting process. Where all parties are not involved in a pre-visit, participating agencies will contact the institution individually regarding the self-study, the visit, and other expectations. However, these contacts must be carefully coordinated to eliminate conflicting instructions regarding the joint accrediting process. Participating institutions should be flexible in establishing visitation dates.

6. **Self-study alternatives:**

When the institution, or an administrative unit within an institution, is seeking accreditation from more than one agency, the self-study may take a variety of forms, including the following:

(a) Common self-study, (b) Core self-study, with varying supplemental analyses, (c) Separate self-studies, with certain common elements, (d) A non-traditional alternative.

Institutions may wish to prepare single reporting documents designed to meet all requirements of each agency. The nature and format of the self-study document should be negotiated at the time a joint accrediting cycle is initiated. Where the team will function as a unit (such as an institutional agency and programmatic agency visiting a single-purpose institution), a common self-study is indicated. In multipurpose institutions, joint visits may be concurrent rather than coordinated. In the consultative stages establishing the accrediting process, a procedure for responding adequately to the data needs of all the accrediting agencies should be negotiated.

7. **Visiting team and on-site visit:**

Written agreements should include: the team's composition; the complementary skills required and the responsibility for their selection; designation of the chairman (who will normally be from the coordinating agency); procedures to be followed during the visit; the format of the written report; the process of its development; the nature of recommendations; and their reporting to the institution.

Cooperating agencies are encouraged to share data about potential site visitors, forming common pools of names where possible or exchanging information in specific situations. All site visitors may be selected from the common pool by the coordinating agency, or the cooperating agencies may determine criteria (size of team, areas of competency desired, background experience related to institution to be visited, etc.) and specify the number of team members to be selected by each cooperating agency. Where there are only two cooperating agencies, co-chairmen may be designated by each agency. The chairman (co-chairmen) is responsible for making logistical arrangements.

A specialized accrediting agency can add a valuable dimension by working cooperatively with an appropriate institutional accrediting agency in the selection of a generalist to serve on the team. Where an institutional accrediting agency needs certain expertise on a team, the appropriate specialized accrediting agency can provide assistance. In developing cooperative team arrangements, however, the integrity of the review process must be preserved. Generalists cannot effectively replace specialists, or vice versa, and a large team representing several accrediting agencies may not be as effective as coordinated multiple teams.

8. **Commission action:**
Accrediting decisions on reports are made in accordance with the policies established by the participating agencies. Where a common team report is filed, each accrediting commission should receive a copy. Where no common report is feasible, each accrediting commission takes action on the report prepared by its team representatives. Each commission should take such action as its standards require and as supported by the report data. Accrediting actions by any commission (institutional or programmatic) should be shared with participating accrediting agencies.

9. **Fees and costs:**
Because the costs of an accrediting cycle could be reduced through coordination among accrediting agencies, fees and costs should be determined between and among accrediting agencies prior to the accrediting process. The institution is responsible for paying the usual or reduced fees to each agency to cover any costs of general agency services related to the accrediting cycle. Direct costs of a site visit can be reduced through such cooperative arrangements as a joint team, and therefore the fee to the institution can be proportionately reduced. In instances where a cooperating agency does not assess a fee to the institution, its proportionate costs will have to be determined and that agency would honor its share. Each agency should handle its own billing.

It should be noted that one of the most significant reductions in the cost burden to the institution can result from a combined self-study, reporting system, etc.

Suggested Readings

Accrediting Agency Approaches to Academic Program Evaluation, by Kenneth E. Young and Charles M. Chambers, New Directions for Institutional Research, 27, 1980.

A Study of Interagency Cooperation in Accreditation Activity, by Marie N. Carver and Fred F. Harcleroad, Task Force Report on Interagency Cooperation, October 1977.

Multiple Accreditation Relationships of Postsecondary Institutions in the United States, by H.R. Kells and Richard M. Parrish, COPA, June 1979.

Opinions About Accreditation and Interagency Cooperation, a nationwide survey by Fred L. Pigge, COPA, July 1979.

Adopted by the COPA Board
October 7, 1980

Policy Statement on the Evaluation of Accrediting Activities by Institutions

In the spirit of involving institutions more consciously in accreditation at the national tional level and promoting accountability on the part of institutions, accrediting associations and COPA in the total self-regulatory process, the following guidelines have been adopted by the Council for evaluative activities related to: (1) the accreditation of an institution/program; and (2) the recognition of an accrediting association by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation.

A. Guidelines for Institutional Evaluation of Accrediting Activities

The Council encourages associations to utilize the following as general guidelines when revising or developing processes and procedures for institutional evaluation of the accrediting process:

1. Components of the Accrediting Process
   Although not an inclusive list, the following represent five important components of the accrediting process about which institutions should be given the opportunity to respond:
   a. The self-study process (e.g., clarity of format, usefulness as a planning exercise, etc.)
   b. The site visit (e.g., appropriateness and ability of team members and Chair, general arrangements, usefulness to institution/program, etc.)
   c. The report (e.g., consistency with site visit, analysis in terms of compliance with agency standards, factual correctness, objectivity in judgment, etc.)
   d. Final action (e.g., consistency with preceding process, fairness, provision of opportunity for improvement/growth, etc.)
   e. Overall effectiveness of accrediting process (e.g., evaluation of the association's standards and procedures, commitment to institutional input, objectivity in making judgments, appeals process, communication processes, commitment to the involvement of institutions's chief executive officer, costs of accreditation, etc.)

2. Form and Timing of Institutional Evaluations
   The Council recognizes that the form and timing of evaluations by institutions differ widely from association to association. Many associations already include in their procedures an evaluation of the five components listed above. The Council believes an evaluation of the fourth component particularly important—that associations provide institutions/programs the opportunity to respond formally after the final accreditation action is taken.
   Further, the Council urges associations to conduct evaluative processes which:
   a. can be summarized on an annual or periodic basis. (Several associations presently include evaluative summaries among their application materials for COPA recognition.);
   b. include the participation of the institution's chief executive officer, and of the program director where appropriate; and
   c. are useful to the growth of the association and the improvement of its policies and procedures.

B. Guidelines for Announcing the Recognition Reviews of Accrediting Associations – Public Notice of Reviews and Process

As stated in the Provisions and Procedures for Becoming Recognized as an Accrediting Agency for Postsecondary Educational Institutions or Programs, COPA will publish notice no later than four months in advance of an agency's scheduled review in *Accreditation* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education.* The purpose of the notice is to invite third party written or oral testimony to be incorporated in the review of an agency. As of the March, 1983 meeting of the Assembly of National Postsecondary Educational Organizations (ANPEO), the ACE Publication, *Higher Education & National Affairs* (HENA) become the third publication to carry these public notices.

For purposes of providing the broadest dissemination possible to the higher education community of the public notice (as well as information related to the COPA recognition process, task forces, complaints and appeals processes, etc.) the Council urges that:

1. This information be placed in as many of the ANPEO publications as possible, and that the representatives of the national organizations in ANPEO facilitate the inclusion of these materials in their respective publications.
2. An accrediting body being reviewed should provide notice of its review to its various publics, (e.g., chief executive officers, program/discipline heads, those in the profession and the general public) so that all concerned with the work of the accrediting body may be informed of the opporunity to participate in the COPA review.

Since third party testimony must address the agency's compliance with specific COPA provisions, public notices should indicate that copies of the provisions can be secured from the COPA office.

Adopted by the COPA Board
October 6, 1983

Policy Statement on Accreditation and the Public Interest

Accreditation is essentially a public service, performed by agencies often characterized as "quasi-public." The public interest* in their performance is that:

- Accreditation perform properly its primary functions, namely, to help improve the quality of educational institutions or programs and to serve as a signficant indicator that an institution or program is meeting established standards and its own stated objectives.
- Accreditation be conducted in a manner that will help to establish the validity and effectiveness of educational activities, while at the same time it does not impose inappropriately restrictive requirements or discourage innovation and experimentation.
- Accreditation assist institutions, students, and others in identifying acceptable institutions and programs for purposes of enrollment, transfer of credits, and eligibility for public and private funds.
- Accreditation protect institutions and programs against harmful internal and external pressures, e.g., of the kind that would curtail academic freedom or that would eliminate or severely reduce academic standards.

The process of accreditation should recognize and serve the public interest, as described by:

- Requiring clear statements of objectives and thorough and candid self-evaluation reports of institutions and programs;
- Providing due process in hearings and appeals, wide dissemination of information concerning the purposes, practices and decisions of accreditation, competent personnel on accrediting commissions and teams, and public representatives on accrediting commissions or equally significant participation of public representatives in the accrediting process;
- Making the accreditation process as open as possible consistent with accomplishing the purposes of accreditation; and
- Establishing conditions of functional independence in which accrediting commissions may perform their duties.

Functional Independence

Commissions and visiting teams that accredit institutions and programs are made up largely of representatives of accredited institutions and programs. Decisions therefore reflect a large measure of peer evaluation, but they must not under any circumstances become acts of reciprocity among peers. While all team and commission members should protect against this possibility, the presence of public members should be particularly helpful in this regard. The foregoing is stated as a reminder to be alert; it is not intended to reflect adversely upon the prevailing practices of accreditation.

In many instances in the program field a sponsoring professional or vocational organization establishes and funds an accrediting commission. Nevertheless, the commission must set policy and act outside of sponsorship direction. The independence desired of a program accrediting commission is achieved if the review by the sponsoring organization of accrediting activities is limited, as a matter of general practice, to the receipt of reports, the approval of the budget (if required), and the acceptance of general accrediting policies as developed by the accrediting commission. The purpose of this policy is to make educational concerns paramount in the accrediting process.

Public Members

1. All members on accrediting commissions have the duty to recognize the public interest, but public members should be selected for the purpose of giving special attention to that interest.
2. There should be at least one public member on small commissions (7 or less) and at least two public representatives on the larger commissions. All members of the commissions shall have the same voting rights. Terms and attendance requirements

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*By public interest is meant the interest of students and parents and the public generally as purchaser, supporter and consumer of educational services.

should apply equally to all members and be set forth in the bylaws of the commissions, but in any event, not more than two unexcused absences should be permitted public members and their period of service should not aggregate more than eight years.

3. In exceptional situations where there are no public members on the accrediting commission, the public interest should be represented by equally significant participation: e.g., substantial participation by public representatives on an oversight committee which reviews and reports upon all accrediting activities.

4. A public member should be selected on the basis of being a person with an informed, broad-gauged community point of view who can contribute a fresh, nonprofessional approach (an outside perspective) to accrediting problems.

   In the case of institutional accrediting, the public member may, but need not, be a current or former trustee of a university or college, even though that member's institution is subject to recognition or review by the accrediting commission, provided that he or she does not participate in the recognition or review process or decision affecting such institution.

   In the case of program accrediting, the public member should not be a current or past member of the profession or vocation whose educational programs are being accredited. Practitioner representation is certainly valuable and may well be in the public interest, but public membership per se derives from different objectives.

5. The public member who has served or is serving as a lay member of a board of trustees or board of overseers or of an alumni council of a university or college, may relate more readily to accreditation problems than other public members. However, such experience is not requisite. Under any circumstances, all public members, on appointment, should be given a full orientation by staff on the purposes, policies, and methods of accreditation and subsequently be encouraged to participate as an observer on an accreditation visit by an inspection team.

6. Public members should be selected after affording the commission members and executive staff a full opportunity to make recommendations of desirable candidates. Appropriate institutions and educational programs, civic and community organizations, and representatives of public bodies might well be consulted.

7. COPA desires to receive from accrediting agencies the biographical data concerning their public members and the type of organization, if any, which suggested or recommended their names. The purpose of obtaining this information is to enable COPA to advise its membership on the best ways to procure effective members. COPA requests this cooperation from its constituents.

Conflict of Interest

No member of an accrediting commission or committee should participate in any way in accrediting decisions in which he has a pecuniary or personal interest or with respect to which, because of present institutional or program association, he has divided loyalties or conflicts on the outcome of the decision; provided that this restriction is not intended to prevent participation in decision-making in the general run of cases which does not directly or substantially affect the institution or program with which he is associated or its competitive position with a neighboring institution or program under review.

Public Meetings and Decisions

1. Commission meetings at which policy is determined or changes in standards or procedures are considered for adoption should be public. Oral and written presentations by institutions or programs in support of applications and deliberations of the Commission thereon may be in executive session.

2. Affirmative and negative decisions of the accrediting commission and any qualifying conditions thereof shall be made public. However, if an appeal is filed the ac-

crediting commissions may withhold the public announcement of an initial negative decision during such an appeal.

3. Except in emergency situations or when required by law, proposals for important changes in standards or procedures should be circulated (30 days in advance of consideration) to the institutions or programs subject to the accrediting commission's jurisdiction. Distribution of proposals should be made to an administrative official of an institution or program designated by said institution or program as liaison representative to the accrediting commission as well as the executive officer of the institution (which is required by the COPA Provisions and Procedures).

Self-Evaluation and Team Reports

1. Preliminary team reports should be made available to the institution or program and given such distribution within the institution as may be necessary to provide an opportunity for the correction of factual errors and for responding to views and recommendations stated in the preliminary report.
2. Final team reports may be released to the public by the institution after that accrediting commission makes its decision on an application, provided that an earlier release may be made with the consent of the accrediting commission.
3. In the event that an institution or program releases parts of self-evaluation and team reports that, in view of the accrediting agency, provided a distorted version of either or both reports, then the accrediting agency may release the full report or reports or such parts thereof as will correct the distortion.

Due Process

1. The accrediting agency shall publish (a) its procedures of application, presentation, decision, and appeal and (b) the substantive criteria it applies in the evaluation of an institution or program.
2. Nothing herein shall require any conduct contrary to the provisions of pertinent federal or state legislation, including in particular, public meeting and record laws.

General Considerations

1. The public should be given some reasonable assurance, through the accrediting process, that the institution or program, wherever it operates, conducts its academic operations with integrity: i.e., substantive curriculum, competent teaching, adequate facilities and equipment, and admissions policy that is consistent with the mission of the institution or program and fair and honest judgments on student performance.
2. Publications of institutions and programs shall fairly and clearly describe their academic offerings.
3. Claims regarding job placement or entry into graduate or professional schools as a result of the education or training offered by the institution or program shall reflect the actual experience of such placement.
4. Accrediting agencies should publish periodic reports for the general public (on a less technical level than contemplated by the due-process provisions) describing their activities, procedures, and criteria and how they relate to the maintenance and improvement of educational quality. The factors pertaining to such quality, in terms of the type of accreditation involved, should be identified and discussed in these reports. An example of this kind of report is the publication of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools on "Characteristics of Excellence."

Approved by the COPA Board
April 9, 1980

Note: Implementation of mandatory items was deferred until revised provisions for recognition being developed by the Committee on Recognition had been adopted by COPA.

Joint Policy Statement on Accreditation of Graduate Education (1978)

COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY ACCREDITATION
COUNCIL ON GRADUATE SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Preface

This statement presents major policies and recommended procedures for the acditation of graduate programs. It was developed by a Joint Task Force of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the Council on Graduate Schools in consultation with recognized accrediting bodies, and has been approved by the COPA and CGS governing boards. It is intended to apply to all institutions offering graduate work which are accredited or seek accreditation by an agency recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. These include "newer" types such as external degree programs, programs established for highly specialized student populations, and/or programs and institutions sponsored by the government, business, or industry as well as the traditional colleges and universities.

I. Boyd Page, President, CGS
Kenneth E. Young, President, COPA

The maintenance and improvement of quality has always been a dominant concern in graduate education. The subtleties and ambiguities surrounding the concept of quality do not obviate the need for continuing review and assessment. Moreover, in recent years, new developments have made more necessary diligence and vigilance in appraising academic quality and institutional viability. More prominent among these developments are: the continuing decline of financial support of graduate education, changing enrollments, increasing heterogeneity of student populations, growing public demand for "accountability," accelerating interest in innovative and experimental programs and institutions, rapidly developing off-campus and satellite centers, changing patterns of institutional governance, and increasing complexity of such issues as academic credit.

For approximately a half century, a major indicator of these qualities has been accreditation by a nationally recognized accrediting agency. Such accreditation is unique to this country and serves in place of governmental evaluation and control characteristic of most other nations. Although its effectiveness has been generally recognized by the higher education community, certain aspects continue to be of healthy interest and concern. The accreditation of graduate work, in particular, poses a variety of thought-provoking questions. Who shall accredit? For what purposes? At what levels? In what fields? According to what procedures?

These and similar concerns are addressed in the following sections of this publication.

Definition of Terms

Graduate Program. Since the essence of graduate education lies in the graduate degree program, the program is the appropriate basis for consideration of accreditation of graduate work. A graduate degree program is considered to be a set of academic experiences offered to a graduate student which are to be satisfactorily completed in order to make appropriate the award of a graduate degree such as Master or Doctor.

Two main types of graduate programs, distinguishable by primary objectives, have been traditionally recognized:

1. Research-oriented graduate degree programs, where the primary objective is to train graduate students through the Master's or Doctor's level as preparation for scholarly or research activity directed mainly toward the acquisition of new knowledge, and completion of the program ordinarily is identified by award of the degree of Master of Arts (M.A.), Master of Science (M.S.), or Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D).
2. Practice-oriented graduate degree programs, where the primary objective is to train graduate students through the Master's or Doctor's level in preparation for professional practice directed mainly toward the application or transmission of existing knowledge, and completion of the program ordinarily is identified by award of the degree of Master of (Professional Field) or Doctor of (Professional Field), e.g., Master of Education (ME), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Social Work

(MSW), Master of Fine Arts (MFA), Doctor of Arts (DA), Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA), and others.

Today, this distinction is made more in an attempt to bring order to the confused state of degree nomenclature rather than to imply a sharp dichotomy between the two types. Indeed, in many instances, the purposes and requirements of the programs have merged to the point where they are indistinguishable, and such questions as "What is a 'professional' program?" and "What is a 'disciplinary' program?" may not be as important as they may have been in the past.

Accreditation. Accreditation in postsecondary education in the United States is a voluntary, nongovernmental self-regulating process (although there may be certain types of interaction with state agencies and, to a lesser extent, the federal government). The granting of accreditation status signifies that an institution or program meets or exceeds a level of quality considered to be necessary for that particular institution or program to achieve its stated purposes and thereby meet its responsibilities to all its publics.

There are two types of accreditation in higher education:

1. General or institutional accreditation is accreditation of a total institution and represents an expression of confidence by a nationally recognized accrediting association in an institution's mission, purposes, resources, present performance, and long-range ability to maintain or improve that performance.

   There are currently nine postsecondary commissions of six regional associations as well as four national associations for specialized institutions which are recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation to perform this function. In addition, several of the programmatic accrediting agencies accredit freestanding, single-purpose institutions.

2. Specialized or programmatic accreditation is accreditation of a particular program within a college or university by a nationally recognized accediting association representing a single practice-oriented field, such as architecture, law, medicine, psychology, or social work, primarily in order to assure that the purposes and accomplishments of the practice-oriented program meet the needs of society. There are approximately forty national professional agencies which primarily accredit programs within institutions and which are recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation to perform this function.

Purposes and Functions

Graduate Education. The major, traditional, and nationally-recognized purposes of graduate education are generally considered to be:

1. The advanced education and intellectual development of able and motivated individuals in a variety of forms and disciplines essential to the pursuit of specific careers.
2. The production of new knowledge through research and intellectual inquiry and/or the application of knowledge toward the solution of technological, social, economic, and political problems and issues.
3. The preservation and transmission of knowledge and the extension of our cultural heritage of successive generations.

Accreditation. The higher education community recognizes the following purposes of accreditation:

1. The fostering of excellence in postsecondary education through the development of criteria and guidelines for assuring educational effectiveness.
2. The encouragement of self-improvement through continuous self-study and assessment.
3. Assurance to the higher education community, the general public, and other agencies or organizations that an institution or program has clearly defined and appropriate objectives, has the resources for reasonable assurance of the attainment

of stated objectives, and is making a continuous effort to produce evidence of the attainment of its objectives.

4. Provision of counsel and assistance to developing institutions and programs.
5. Encouragement of diversity, experimentation, and innovation with the boundaries of generally accepted standards and guidelines of academic quality.
6. Protection of institutions against encroachment which might jeopardize educational effectiveness or academic freedom.

Responsibility for Accreditation

In order to implement the two sets of purposes stated above and in order to best serve the general interest and welfare of the public, it is recommended that:

1. The review and appraisal of graduate degree programs should be included as part of the institutional accreditation of a college or university.
2. Programmatic accreditation should be considered appropriate primarily for practice-oriented fields, particularly those which focus on the protection of the health, safety, and well-being of the public.
3. The granting of institutional accreditation should take cognizance of, but need not require, specialized accreditation of individual graduate degree programs, and vice versa.
4. Accrediting agencies in their requirements and procedures should avoid placing an unnecessary burden upon an institution or program.
5. Institutional and specialized accrediting agencies should continue to explore more effective means for interaction and cooperation.
6. Institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies should be prepared, in all instances, to justify their requirements and activities as expressions of concern for educational quality and public interest.

The Evaluation and Accreditation Process

Existing Programs. In institutional accreditation, all graduate programs are considered to be vital and integral components of the institution and are included within its comprehensive evaluation. In specialized accreditation, the graduate program is viewed in depth as well as within the context of the total institution. In both instances, the evaluation and accreditation process typically consists of: (1) an intensive self-analysis by the institution or program; (2) an on-site visit by an evaluation team; and (3) a judgment of representatives of the community of interests sitting as a decision-making body.

In order to be of maximum benefit to the institution and program, the context of the self-study should be introspective and analytical rather than merely descriptive. A primary focus should be upon the determination of quality through an assessment of outcomes, i.e., the evidence which the institution/program is producing or seeking to produce concerning the attainment of its stated objectives. For a graduate program, such evidence might appropriately include: (1) student and alumni evaluations of their programs and courses; (2) longitudinal studies of the professional performance of graduates; (3) data concerning the continuing scholarly productivity of graduates; and (4) such other information congruent with the stated objectives of the program and institution.

The second part of the evaluation process is the on-site evaluation visit by a team of peer representatives from other institutions and, in the case of specialized agencies, from the professions. The team's major function is to make a considered group judgment, as informed colleagues and professionals, on the educational effectiveness of the institution and/or program. In order to assure that the graduate program(s) receive proper attention during this phase of the process, it is strongly recommended that each regional team visiting an institution with substantial graduate offerings should include a person competent to appraise the organization and administration of graduate study within the context and structure of the total institution. It is further recommended that all regional team members representing academic disciplines or specialized fields include the assessment of graduate programs in their specializations as part of their evaluation responsibility. Where a program has received specialized accreditation, however, there is no need for the regional team's assessment to recapitulate that of the programmatic agency.

The various accrediting agencies publish standards and guidelines for use in the assessment of graduate programs. Today, most of these are expressed qualitatively rather than quantitatively as in the past. They usually recommend consideration of the following aspects of graduate study:

Clarity and appropriateness of objectives;
Identity of the graduate and professional programs as administrative units;
Qualifications of the faculty;
Design and content of the graduate program;
Appropriateness of admission, retention, and degree requirements;
Policies regarding academic credit by transfer, life experiences, or other nontraditional activities;
Policies and requirements for off-campus or extension centers;
Adequacy of supporting resources;
Interaction and interrelation with the undergraduate programs;
Evidence of educational outcomes.

New Programs. Since graduate degree programs initiated subsequent to the most recent accreditation are not automatically included in that accreditation, it is recommended that each accrediting agency develop a statement of policy and procedure for the approval of new programs. In general, each agency should receive an institution's notice of intent prior to the introduction of the program. If the proposed program is closely allied to existing graduate offerings, the notice of intent may consist of a brief description of the proposed program or it may be a duplicate of the planning document prepared for approval by the institution's governing board or state agency.

If the proposed program is: (1) at a higher degree level; (2) in a totally different field; (3) at an off-campus location; or (4) requires a significant increase in resources, a more detailed notice of intent is appropriate. It is suggested that this document include such data as: (1) evidence of need for the program; (2) adequacy of faculty, library, and research resources; (3) outline of degree requirements; and (4) plans for the evaluation of educational outcomes.

The accrediting agency should review the educational nature of the proposal as well as its potential impact on related programs and the total institution. The accrediting agency should notify the institution whether its accreditation will be extended to include the new program or whether additional information, an on-site evaluation, or other measures will be required.

Programs at Separately Accreditable Units. When an institution conducts graduate programs in a variety of locations or through a number of discrete units, it will be expected to consult the appropriate accrediting agencies concerning the manner in which evaluation will be conducted and accreditation designated.

Graduate programs offered at a separately accreditable unit located outside the geographical region of the parent institution should normally be included in the accreditation of that unit by the regional accrediting agency responsible for that location. Communication and interaction between involved agencies are, of course, essential.

In the review of graduate programs at units not separately accreditable but conducted by an institution outside its own accrediting region, representatives of the agency in that region should be invited to participate in any on-site evaluation conducted by the accrediting agency of the region in which the parent institution is located.

Policies concerning the quality of education and related matters such as advertising, dues, fees, and related matters pertaining to graduate programs offered at off-campus centers should be consistent with the policies of the responsible accrediting agencies with respect to such centers.

Members Of The Task Force

Charles T. Lester, Vice President of Arts and Sciences, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

James C. Olson, President, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri

Dorothy G. Petersen, Dean Emeritus, Trenton State College, Trenton, New Jersey

Lorene L. Rogers, President, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas

Sanford S. Elberg, Dean of Graduate Division, University of California, Berkeley, California

Herbert Weisinger, Dean of Graduate School, State University of New York, Stony Brook, New York

Staff of the Council on Graduate Schools: J. Boyd Page, President; John W. Ryan, Assistant to the President

Staff of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
- Kenneth E. Young, President
- Charles M. Chambers, Staff Associate
- James M. Phillips, Staff Associate

Policy Statement on Off-Campus Credit Programs

The diversity of American Higher Education is a great strength of our educational system which must be preserved and enhanced. This diversity inheres not only in kinds and types of institutions and programs but also in varying modes of delivery of education used by institutions of higher learning in providing access to quality education regardless of location. While some postsecondary educational institutions have provided off-campus education for nearly a century, the number of institutions and program sites significantly increased in the 1970's. This rapid expansion, coupled with a general public concern over the quality of such activities, led to the development and adoption in 1976 of a COPA policy statement on off-campus degree programs offered by accredited institutions. As a result of this policy, a COPA study of nontraditional education completed in 1978, and operational policies and procedures implemented by the COPA recognized accrediting associations, assessment of off-campus degree programs has received more rigorous and frequent attention.

It is appropriate and timely that the COPA policy statement be updated to reflect significant changes in procedures and practices of accrediting associations in evaluating off-campus educational activities.

The revised policy statement addresses those educational courses, programs, or activities provided in off-campus locations by accredited institutions which lead to a certificate, diploma, degree or other formal credential. An accredited institution and its accrediting associations(s) share the responsibility for the assurance of quality of all credit programs within the association's scope, regardless of location and collaborative sponsorship (i.e., military, business and industry, professions, government, private enterprise). Although the policy does not address non-credit continuing education activities specifically, each accredited institution is expected to exercise responsibility for the quality of these offerings as well.

It is the purpose of this policy statement to provide a framework for COPA recognized accrediting bodies to deal in a consistent and effective manner with their member institutions involved in off-campus educational credit programs and courses. A primary concern is the need to provide reasonable assurance that such programs offered by accredited institutions meet or surpass minimal standards and reflect the quality of the sponsoring institution as a whole.

Since the scope and nature of accrediting associations recognized by COPA are diverse, the principles and intent of the policy statement need to be reflected in each association's operational procedures and criteria for accreditation. Implementation of this policy statement by COPA-recognized accrediting bodies can assure consistency in dealing with off-campus credit programs offered by accredited institutions.

Toward this end, the following principles are set forth:

1. In evaluating off-campus educational activities, the fundamental concern of the accrediting body must be with the unity, continuity and quality of education—institutional and programmatic. Central issues are integrity, administrative and academic control, quality assurance, availability of resources, and supervisory accountability.
2. An institutional accrediting body is responsible for assuring the quality and integrity of all programs of the institution, wherever located.
3. When an educational activity is located outside the region of its home campus and the activity is determined by the regional accrediting body to be separately accreditable, evaluation of the educational activity is the responsibility of the region of location. For those educational activities outside the region that are not separately accreditable, the "Memorandum of Agreement on Off-Campus Education Activities" (Regional Commission Directors, February 1, 1977) and "Procedures for the Evaluation of Institutions Operating Inter-regionally" (Assembly of Institutional Accrediting Bodies, October, 1982) shall apply.
4. A specialized accrediting body, through prior agreement with the institution and in accord with the scope of its COPA recognition, will evaluate all components of an educational program, wherever located.

5. Accrediting bodies will place special emphasis on the assessment of outcomes, results, or value-added factors in the evaluation of off-campus educational activities with respect to institutional/program effectiveness and student learning/performance.
6. An institution is directly responsible for all of its off-campus educational activities, and that responsibility cannot be delegated to third party organizations or individuals. An accredited institution shall not lend its accreditation to unaccredited organizations or persons who operate as contractors to develop and market educational programs.
7. When off-campus units are acquired by merger or purchase, this shall constitute a substantive change requiring an accreditation review. The original units will maintain their status, accredited or unaccredited, until such review is successfully completed. If the acquired or merger unit is separately accreditable, it should be separately accredited, but the acquiring institution must also be reviewed.
8. A common set of procedural guidelines, consistent with this policy statement, will be developed through the COPA Assemblies, for the evaluation of off-campus educational activities, for use in conjunction with those of the accrediting bodies. These procedural guidelines should include the following provisions:
    a. Institutions/programs must provide prior notice and a prospectus for such off-campus activities.
    b. The evaluation will normally include an evaluation report and an on-site visit.
    c. Information will be shared among all accrediting associations involved with the current accredited status of the institution and/or programs.

Adopted by the COPA Board
April 20, 1983

Policy Statement on Disclosure, Confidentiality and the Integrity of the Accrediting Process

The process of accreditation has a two-fold purpose—the **assessment** and the **enhancement** of the educational quality of an institution or program. The process requires an honest, rigorous self-analysis, an on-site evaluation by a team of peers or a validated equivalent of an on-site review, a team report, a subsequent review by an accrediting body, and final action defining the accredited status of the institution or program thus evaluated. Concern for the integrity and effectiveness of the investigative and deliberative process involves **respect for confidentiality of information** required and evaluated. The purposes are endangered and the process is weakened when disclosure of aspects of the process inhibits both the institution's or program's ability to provide complete information and assess itself candidly and the accrediting body's ability to render sound judgments.

The relationship between the accrediting body and the institution or program is private and voluntary. Accrediting decisions are, however, used as a consideration in many formal actions by different publics — government funding agencies, scholarship commissions, foundations, employers, counselors, and potential students. Accrediting bodies have thus come to be viewed as quasi-public entities operating "for the common good" or "in the public interest," with certain responsibilities to the many groups which interact with the educational community. Thus the legitimate needs of accrediting bodies or those of their members for maintaining and preserving the integrity of the process must be reconciled with broader societal needs requiring **disclosure of basic and essential information.**

Relevant Considerations

Any attempt to reconcile the conflicting pressures for disclosure and for confidentiality involves consideration of several dimensions which serve to define the options available. First and foremost is the recognition that, since the public interest lies in the assurance that the institution or program is in fact achieving appropriate educational objectives and meeting established standards, the purpose of **quality-assessment** establishes the specific context within which aspects of the process are to be considered confidential or disclosable.

Within that context other factors must be considered by accrediting bodies as they develop clear and coherent policies on release of information. The **timing** of disclosure may in some instances be critical to preserve the integrity of the process and to provide correct information. The **extent** of disclosure may also be critical. Not all information gathered requires full disclosure, and such disclosure may neither serve the public interest nor help the institution. The **substantive relevance** of information to the purpose of quality-assessment should also be a significant consideration. Further, since information may be provided for varied purposes in different ways, the **means** of dissemination may be a significant factor in providing the clearest context of understanding of the information.

Accrediting bodies also have a responsibility to understand the legal responsibilities that are imposed as a consequence of being considered quasi-public entities. COPA policy statements, guidelines, and **provisions** for recognition (Part B in particular) acknowledge these obligations.[1]

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Principles Relevant to Disclosure

In addressing the specific issues relevant to disclosure of information on aspects of the accrediting process, the following principles, consistent with the COPA provisions for recognition and the integrity of the accrediting process, are set forth:

1. Each accrediting body should have a clear statement of policy on what is to be reserved or kept confidential and what is to be disclosed with respect to documents generated in the accreditation process, information concerning decisions on accredited status, and information concerning the status of affiliation of the institution or program with the association.

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[1] An analysis of the judicial and legislative context relevant to the responsibilities of accrediting agencies is available from the COPA office. In addition, associations may find significant help in the COPA Occasional Paper by William K. Kaplin on "Accreditation and the Public Interest".

2. Concern for maintaining and protecting the integrity and effectiveness of the accrediting process should play the major role in shaping accrediting body policies and procedures on disclosure of information.
3. Since quality-assessment defines the matrix within which items are to be considered disclosable or confidential, clear distinctions must be drawn between those substantively related to the determination of accredited status and those related to institutional or program improvement, e.g., between recommendations for action considered essential for maintenance of accredited status and advisory suggestions for the enhancement of the institution's or program's educational quality. The latter are not relevant for public disclosure.
4. Since the accreditation process involves the work of voluntary peer-evaluators, great care must be taken to ensure not only that the composition of visiting teams and review committees represents appropriate, relevant, and varied expertise, points of view and experience, but that evaluators are rigorously trained in good practices of securing and processing information essential for an objective and responsible review, and of reproducing this information in the reports or other communications developed.
5. In the development of policies and procedures for disclosure of information consistent with these principles and with COPA provisions for recognition, accrediting bodies should take account of the following guidelines, organized according to five categories of disclosure.

Guidelines for Accrediting Bodies on Disclosure of Accrediting Information

The following guidelines have been developed by COPA to assist accrediting bodies in determining the extent of disclosure essential to meeting their responsibilities to the many persons and groups which interact with the educational community, while maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of the self-regulatory process as a reliable authority in identifying quality in postsecondary education.

The relationship between the accrediting body and the institution or program is a contractual one, whether formal or informal. Legally the institution is the governing board or the corporate board of directors. When an institution is part of an educational system in which the institution's chief executive officer is in a line relationship to the chief executive officer of the system, this relationship should be taken into account in developing procedures for dissemination of information.

I. Information which must be published and disseminated.

A. Information concerning the accrediting body

The accrediting body must describe in official documents its scope, evaluative criteria, and procedures (**Provision B.3.; C.4.**), clearly delineating the process by which the accrediting decision is reached (**Provision C.2.; C.4.**) and the outcome of the process with respect to given institutions or programs (**C.13.; C.14.**).

B. Information relevant to decisions on pre-accreditation or accreditation status

1. At least annually, in an official publication, a current listing of all institutions or programs with status in the accrediting body. (**Provision B.4.**)
2. At least annually, in an official publication,[2] all final decisions with respect to accredited status, affirmative and negative,[3] made during that year. (**Provision B.4.**) An institution or program which withdraws an appalication for status need not be identified. A decision to deny an initial application for status need not be published.
3. Any accrediting body procedures or policies for the release of additional information relevant to such decisions. (**Provision B.3.**)

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[2] The publication need not necessarily be the same as the one listing current accredited status. It may appear in a newsletter, quarterly, or public portion of Commission/Board minutes.

[3] If an appeal of a negative decision is filed, the accrediting body may withhold the public announcement of the decision during such an appeal. (COPA policy statement "Accreditation and the Public Interest",4)

II. Information that should be published relevant to affiliation status.

At least the following information should be published in an official publication concerning the status of affiliation of an institution or program with the accrediting body, unless the information is otherwise available. The information should be preceded by a statement of the accrediting body's scope of accreditation activities, and indications as to where additional information may be obtained.

1. The name and address of the institution.
2. Designation of the institution's character and form of governance — public or private, non-profit or for profit, and whether it is part of a system.
3. Names of the chief executive officer, and, in the case of specialized programs, the name of the program director.
4. Accredited status:
    - a. Date of initial accreditation.
    - b. Date of most recent final action following a comprehensive evaluation.
5. Indication of whether degree-granting programs are offered at multiple program sites.
6. Level of offering—non-degree, associate, baccalaureate, professional, master's, doctoral.[4] (Specialized accrediting bodies will designate the level of program(s) accredited)

III. Information which is available upon request.

A. Information relevant to affiliation status.

At least the following information should be made available in response to inquiries from parties seeking information relevant to the status of a specific institution or program.[5]

1. Name and address of the institution.
2. Institution's character—public or private, nonprofit or for profit—with identification of proprietors of for profit institutions.
3. Accredited status.
4. Location(s) of offerings.[6]
5. Level of offerings.

B. Information concerning the accrediting body

1. Surveys, reports, etc., of the accrediting body.
2. A yearly list of scheduled visits.
3. The academic and professional qualifications of the members of its policy and decision-making bodies and its administrative personnel.

IV. Information available only from the institution, or by the accrediting body with the consent of the institution.

This category includes information supplied by the institution or program and/or the accrediting body in the course of the accrediting process and not incorporated in other public documents, such as the self-study, team report, recommendations of the team or intermediate review committee, institutional/programmatic responses to recommendations, and correspondence between the accrediting body and the institution related to the accreditation process.

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[4] This information may be provided by special designation, i.e., "a, b, p, m, d" or other pattern; a general statement concerning the college's offering of programs in arts, sciences, and/or professional curricula at a particular degree-level or of courses at this level not applicable to degrees offered; reference to the institutional catalog; or reference to the COPA office for specificity concerning specialized accreditation of programs.

[5] Each accrediting body should maintain a brief history of the accredited status of all institutions or programs. The accrediting body may refer the inquirer to the institution for additional information, or develop with the institution a joint statement that both may use.

[6] Expanded information may be provided on off-campus sites (in-state, out-of-state, out-of-region, military bases, etc.) and/or the inquirer may be directed to the institution for such detail.

Accrediting bodies should encourage institutions or programs to make publicly available information about their accredited status, and to share visiting team reports and institutional program responses with appropriate state agencies authorized to evaluate and approve institutional academic programs and therefore having a legitimate claim to information beyond that available to the general public.

V. Information necessary to correct misrepresentation.

If an institution or program releases information that misrepresents or distorts any action by the accrediting body with respect to any aspect of the accreditation process, or the status of affiliation with the accrediting body, the chief executive officer of the institution and the program director, where applicable, will be notified and informed that corrective action must be taken. If the misrepresentation or distortion is not promptly corrected, then the accrediting body may, at its discretion, release a public statement in such a form and content as it deems necessary to provide the correct information.

VI. Information not available for dissemination under any circumstances.

Certain relationships yield information which legally cannot be disclosed without the consent of the person who provides it — for example, the relationship between physician and patient, between attorney and client, between clergy and penitent, etc. Should such information, or other information that is protected under law by a comparable privilege or safeguard, come into the hands of an accrediting body or evaluation team, its disclosure to persons other than the immmediate recipients would of course be inappropriate and might even be legally actionable.

Adopted by the COPA Board
October 11, 1984

The Council on Postsecondary Accreditation
One Dupont Circle • Suite 305 • Washington, DC 20036